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CHOICEST PIECES
OF
Practical Divinity,

Which have been publish'd in the
ENGLISH TONGUE.

IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

VOL. XXXVI.

BRISTOL:
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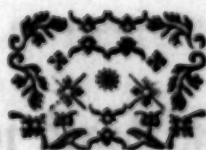
EXTRACTS

FROM THE

WORKS

Of the Reverend

Mr. *JOHN BROWN.*



EXTRACTS

FROM THE

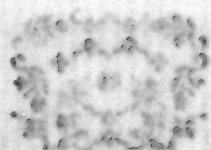
WORKS

OF THE REVEND



MR. JOHNSON.

CHRISTIANITY



CHRISTIANITY

CHRIST

THE

Way, the Truth, and the Life :

OR, A

SHORT DISCOURSE,

POINTING

The WAY of making Use of

CHRIST for *Justification,*

And more particularly

For *Sanctification.*



CHRIST

THE
Way, the Truth, and the Life:

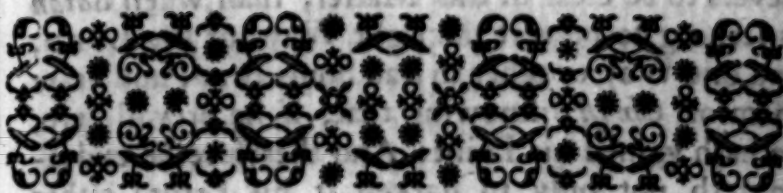
SHORT DISCOURSE,



CHRIST for Justification,

For Sanctification.

CHRIST



CHRIST

The Way, the Truth, &c.

JOHN xiv. 6.

JESUS saith unto them, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: No Man cometh unto the Father but by Me.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction, with some general Observations.

IT is always necessary for the Children of God to know the right Way of making Use of *Christ*, who is made all Things to them which they need, even *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*: But it is never more necessary for Believers

lievers to be clear in this Matter, than when *Satan* is seeking to pervert the right Ways of the LORD, and one Way or other to lead Souls away, and draw them off *Christ*; knowing that, if he prevail here, he hath gained his Point: And therefore he endeavoureth not only to darken it by Error, either more gross or more subtil, but also to darken it by Mistakes and Prejudices; whence it cometh to pass, that not only Strangers are made to wander out of the Way, but often many of his own People are walking in Darkness, and remain lean through Want of the real Exercise of the Life of Faith, which would make them fat and flourishing, because it would make them *strong in the LORD, and in the Power of his Might, and to grow in Christ in all Things.*

THE clearing up of this Truth then cannot but be most seasonable now, when *Satan* is prevailing with many, whom he cannot get tempted to Looseness, to sit down upon Something which is not *Christ*, and to rest upon Something within themselves, distinct from Him, both in the Matter of Justification and Sanctification! This subtil Adversary is now setting some a-work, to cry up, by Preaching, Speaking and Printing, a Way to Heaven which is not *Christ*; a Kind of Morality, and outward Holiness, whereupon the Soul is to rest; And this Holiness, not wrought thro' the Strength of *Jesus*, by Faith sucking Life from Him; but through their own Art and Skill; which in Effect is Nothing but an Extract of refined *Popery*, devised and broached on Purpose to draw the Soul off *Christ*, that he may stand upon his own Legs, and walk by his own Power, and thank himself, at least in Part, for the Crown at length.

THROUGH

THROUGH the great Goodness of GOD, the true Way of a Soul's Justification is admirably cleared up; and many are, at least theoretically, acquainted therewith; and many also practically, to the quieting of their wakened Consciences, and stopping the Mouth of their Accusers, and obtaining of Peace, Joy, and the lively Hope of the everlasting Crown. Yet many profess their Unacquaintedness with the solid Way of using *Christ* for Growth in Grace, and true Sanctification; therefore some Discovery of the Truth here cannot but be useful, seasonable, yea and acceptable unto them. If He, who is the Truth, would give Grace to understand and to unfold this so necessary a Truth, and would help to explain this Truth by Faith in Him, who is here said to be the Truth, then should we have Cause to bless and magnify his Name: But if He, because of Sin, shall hide Himself, and not let out those Beams of Light, whereby we might discover Light, we shall but *darken Counsel with Words without Knowledge*, and leave the Matter as unclear as ever. Therefore it is necessary there be both in him that writeth, and in such as read, a single Dependence on Him, *who is given for a Leader*, *Isaiah* lv. 5. and hath promised to *bring the Blind by a Way which they knew not, and to lead them in Paths that they had not known, and to make Darknes Light before them*; that thus, by Faith on Him, we may find the Truth of this verified, *viz.* That He is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

OUR LORD JESUS, from the Beginning of this Chapter, is laying down some Grounds of Consolation, to comfort his Disciples against the sad News of his Death, and to encourage them against the Fears they had of much Evil to befall them, when their LORD and Master should be taken from them; which

which is a sufficient Proof of the tender Heart of *Jesus*, who alloweth all his Followers *strong Consolation* against all Fears, Hazards, Troubles, and Perplexities. He *will not leave them comfortless*; and therefore He layeth strong Grounds of Consolation, to support their drooping and fainting Hearts; as loving to see his Followers *rejoicing always in the LORD, and singing in the Ways of Sion.*

IN Prosecution of which Design, He told them, Verse 4. that they *knew whither He went*, and the Way also He was to take, and by which He was to bring them to the Father, and so to Life eternal. But *Thomas* rashly and incredulously (as too usually he did) venteth himself, and little less than contradicteth his Master, saying, Verse 5. *We know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the Way?*

WHEREUPON *Christ*, after his usual Manner, taketh Occasion to clear up that Ground of Consolation further, and to let them see the true Way of coming to the Father, that thereby they might be helped to see that they were not such Strangers unto the Way as they supposed: And withal, He layeth out the Properties and Excellencies of this Way, as being the only true and living Way; and that in such a Manner, as they might both see the Way to be perfect, full, safe, and satisfying; and also learn their Duty of improving this Way always, and in all Things, untill they come Home to the Father, saying, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No Man cometh to the Father but by Me.*

CHRIST then saying, that He not only is the Way to the Father; even the true Way; but that He is so the true Way, as that He is also Truth itself in the Abstract, and so the living Way, that He is Life itself in the Abstract, giveth us Ground

to

to consider after what Manner He is the Truth and the Life, as well as the Way, and that for the discovering of his being an absolutely perfect, transcendently excellent, and fully satisfying Way, useful to Believers in all Cases, all Distresses, all Difficulties, all Trials, all Temptations, all Doubts, all Perplexities, and in all Causes or Occasions of Distempers, Fears, Faintings, Discouragements. And this will lead us to clear up the Duty of Believers on the other Hand, and to shew how they should, in all their various Cases and Difficulties, make Use of *Christ*, as the only all-sufficient Way to the Father, and as Truth and Life in the Way: And so we will speak of *Christ's* being to his People all that is requisite for them here in the Way, whether for Justification or Sanctification; and how People are to make Use of Him, as being all, or as being *made of GOD to us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

BEFORE we come to the Words in particular, we should look upon them as having Relation to *Thomas's* Words in the preceding Verse, wherein he did little less than contradict what *Christ* had said in the 4th Verse, and learn several comfortable Points of Doctrine, as,

First, THAT *Jesus Christ* is very tender of his Followers, and will not cast them off, nor upbraid them for every Escape, whereby they may provoke Him to Anger, and grieve his Spirit; but gently passeth by many of their Failings, when He findeth they are not obstinate in their Mistake, nor perverse in their Way. For, how gently and meekly doth He here pass over *Thomas's* unhandsome Expression, finding that *Thomas* spoke here, not out of Obstinacy, but out of Ignorance? And the Reason is, because, 1. *Christ* knoweth our Infirmary and Weakness,

Weakness, and is of a tender Heart, and therefore *will not break the bruised Reed*, Isaiah xlii. Well knoweth He that rough and untender Handling would crush us, and break us all in Pieces. And, 2. He is full of Bowels of Mercy, and can *have Compassion on them that are out of the Way*, and can be *touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities*, Heb. iv. 15. and v. 2.

WHICH Truth, as, upon the one Hand, it should encourage all to choose Him for their Leader, and give up themselves to Him, who is so tender of his Followers; so, upon the other Hand, it should rebuke such as are ready to entertain evil and hard Thoughts of Him, as if He were an hard Master, and ill to be followed; and put all from entertaining the least Thought of his Untenderness and Want of Compassion. But moreover,

Secondly, WE see, that Weaknesses breaking out in Believers, when they are honestly and ingenuously laid open before the LORD, will not scare Him away, but rather engage Him the more to help and succour. Much of *Thomas's* Weakness appeared in what he said; yet the same being honestly laid open to *Christ*, not out of a Spirit of Contradiction, but out of a Desire to learn, *Christ* is so far from thrusting him away, that He rather condescendeth the more, out of Love and Tenderness, to instruct him better, and to clear the Way more fully. And that because, 1. He knoweth our Mould, how frail we are, and that, if He should deal with us according to our Folly, we should quickly be destroyed. 2. He is not as Man, hasty, rash, proud; but gentle, loving, tender, and full of Compassion. 3. It is his Office and proper Work to be an Instructor to the Ignorant, and a
Helper

Helper of our Infirmities and Weaknesses, a Physician to bind up and cure our Sores and Wounds.

WHO would not then willingly give up themselves to such a Teacher, that will not thrust them to the Door, nor give them up to themselves, always when their Corruptions would provoke Him thereunto? And what a Madness is this in many, to stand back from *Christ* because of their Infirmities, when, the more Corruption we find, the more should we run to Him? And it is soon enough to depart from *Christ*, when He thrusts us away, and saith, He will have no more to do with us: Yea He will allow us to stay, after we are, as it were, thrice thrust away. Only let us take Heed, that we approve not ourselves in our Evils, that we hide them not, as unwilling to part with them, that we obstinately maintain them not, nor ourselves in them; but that we lie open before Him, and deal with Him, with Honesty, Ingenuity, and Plainness.

Thirdly, WE see further, that Ignorance ingenuously acknowledged and laid open before *Christ*, puts the Soul in a fair Way to get more Instruction. *Thomas* having candidly, in the Simplicity of his Heart, professed his Ignorance, is in a fair Way now to get Instruction; for this is *Christ's* Work; *to instruct the Ignorant, to open the Eyes of the Blind.*

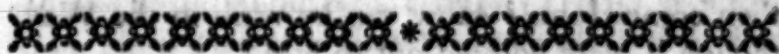
WHY then are we so foolish, as to conceal our Ignorance from Him, and to hide our Condition from Him? And why doth not this commend *Christ's* School to us so much the more? Why do we not tarry as ingenuous Scholars, really desirous to learn? But,

Fourthly, WE may learn, that our ill Condition, put into *Christ's* Hand, will have an advantageous Issue; seeing *Christ* taketh Occasion from *Thomas's* laying open his Condition, to clear up the Truth more fully than it was before. For hereby, 1. *Christ* giveth an open Declaration of the Glory of his Power, Mercy, Goodness, Wisdom. 2. He hath Occasion to give a Proof of his glorious Skill of healing diseased Souls, and of making broken Bones stronger than ever they were. 3. Thus He effectually accomplisheth his noble Designs, and perfecteth his Work, in a Way tending to abase Man, by discovering his Infirmities; and to glorify Himself in his Goodness and Love. 4. Thus He triumphed more over *Satan*, and in a more glorious Manner destroyeth his Works. 5. Thus He declareth how wonderfully He can make *all Things* work together for Good to them that love Him, and follow Him. 6. Yea, thus He engageth Souls to wonder more at his Divine Wisdom and Power; to despair less in Time coming, when Cases would seem hard; to acknowledge his great and wonderful Grace, and his infinite Power and Wisdom, that can bring Death out of Life; and also to be more sensible of the Mercy, and thankful for it.

O BELIEVER, what Matter of Joy is here? How happy art thou, that hast given up thyself to Him! Thy worst Condition can turn to thy Advantage. He can make thy Ignorance, vented with a Mixture of Corruption, turn to the Increase of thy Knowledge. Bless Him for this, and with Joy abide at his School. And withal, be not discouraged, be thy State of Ignorance and Corruption what it will; lay it out before Him with Sincerity and Singleness of Heart, and then thou mayst glory in thine Infirmities, that the Power of *Christ* may rest on thee; for thou shalt see, in due Time, what Advantage

vantage infinite Love and Wisdom can bring to thy Soul thereby.

MAY not this be a strong Motive to induce Strangers to give up themselves to Him, who will sweetly take Occasion, at their Failings, to help them forward in the Way? And what Excuse can they have, who say in Effect they will not go to *Christ* because their Case is not good? And oh that Believers were not sometimes led away with this Error of flying from *Christ*, because of Infirmities seen and discovered!



CHAP. II.

Of the Words in general.

WE come now to the Words themselves, wherein *Christ* asserts that He is (1.) *The Way*; (2.) *The Truth*; (3.) *The Life*; and (4.) *That no Man cometh to the Father but by Him.*

In them we learn these two Things in general:

First, THE Misery of wretched Man by Nature. This cannot be in a few Words expressed. The Particulars thereof we will but mention.

I. THAT he is born an Enemy to, and at a Distance from God, by the Curse of the broken Covenant made with *Adam*.

2. THAT he neither can nor will return to GOD of himself. His Way is not of himself; he hath Need of another to be his Way.

3. THAT he is a blind wandring Creature, ready to take Bye-ways; yea, he loveth to wander: He goeth astray as soon as he is born.

4. HE cannot discern the true Way, but is blinded with Prejudice thereat; he is nothing but a Lump of Error.

5. HE is dead legally and really; how can he then come Home? How can he walk in the Way, though it were pointed out to him?

6. HE, even when entered into the Way, is subject to so many Faintings, and Swoonings; that, except he get new Quickening, he must lie by the Way, and perish.

IN a Word, his Misery is such as cannot be expressed, as little as it is laid to Heart, or seen and lamented.

Now, for a Ground to our following Discourse, I would press the solid, thorough Apprehensions of this, without which there is no Application of *Christ*; for *the Whole need not a Physician, but the Sick*; and *CHRIST is not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*. Yea, Believers themselves should live within the Sight of this, and not forget their Frailty: For though there be a Change wrought in them, yet they have Need of *Christ*, as *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, 'till He bring them in, and set them upon the Throne. And O happy they, who must not walk one Foot without this Guide, leading them by the Hand, or rather carrying

carrying them in his Arms! Let all them, who would make Use of *Christ*, remember what they were, and what they are, and keep the Sense of their Frailty and Misery fresh; that seeing their Need of Him, they may look out to Him for Help and Supply, and be more distinct in their Application of Him.

The second General is, THAT Christ is a compleat Mediator, thoroughly furnished for all our Necessities. Are we at a Distance from the Father? He is a Way to bring us together. Are we wandered out of the Way? He is the Way to us. Are we blind and ignorant? He is the Truth. Are we dead? He is the Life. Concerning this Compleateness of His, we would mark,

1. *THAT He is thoroughly furnished with all Things we stand in Need of: The Way, the Truth, and the Life. He hath Eye-salve, Cloathing, Gold tried in the Fire; for the Spirit of the LORD is upon Him, and hath anointed Him, Isaiah lxi. 1.*

2. *HE is suitably qualified, not only having a Fulness, and an all Fulness, so that whatever we need is to be had in Him; but also a suitable Fulness, answering our Case to the Life.*

3. *HE is richly qualified with this suitable Good. He hath not only Wisdom and Knowledge, but Treasures of it, yea all the Treasures thereof, Col. ii. 3. There is Fulness in Him, yea, it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all Fulness dwell, Col. i. 19. Yea, the Fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him bodily, Col. ii. 9.*

4. *THERE is here that which will answer all the Objections of a Soul, and these sometimes are not*

few. If they say they cannot know the Way to the Father; then He is Truth, to teach them that, and so to enter them into it: And if they say, they cannot walk in that Way, nor advance in it one Step, but will faint and fall; He answereth, that He is the Life, to put Life and keep Life in them, and to cause them to walk, by putting a new Principle of Life in them, and breathing of new on that Principle.

O THrice happy they who have fled to Him for Refuge! It is easy for them to answer all Objections and Cavils of *Satan*, and of a false Heart: It is easy for them to put *Christ* to answer all. And, on the other Hand, who can tell the Misery of such as are Strangers to *Jesus*? How shall their Wants be made up? How shall they answer Accusations, Temptations, Doubts, Fears, Objections and Discouragements cast in their Way?

O SHOULD not this endear the Way of the Gospel to us, and make *Christ* precious unto us! Is it not a Wonder that such an all-sufficient Mediator, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to GOD through Him, should be so little regarded and sought unto, and that there should be so few that embrace Him, and take Him, as He is offered in the Gospel?

How can this be answered in the Day of Accounts? What Excuse can Unbelievers have? Is not all to be found in *Christ* that their Case calleth for? Is He not a compleat Mediator, thoroughly furnished with all Necessaries? Are not the Riches of his Fulness written on all his Dispensations? The Mouths then of Unbelievers must be for ever stopt.



CHAP. III.

How CHRIST is the Way, in general.

WE come now to speak more particularly to the Words: And, 1. Of his being a Way. Our Design being to point at the Way of using *Christ*, in all our Necessities and Difficulties which are in our Way to Heaven; and particularly to point out the Way how Believers should make Use of *Christ* in all their Exigencies, and so live by Faith in Him, walk in Him, grow up in Him, advance and march forward toward Glory in Him. It will not be amiss to speak of this Fulness of *Christ* in Reference to Unbelievers, as Occasion offereth; because this will help to clear the other.

BEFORE we can clear up how any can make Use of *Christ*, we must speak Something of their Necessity of Him, and of his being furnished fully, richly and satisfyingly for their Case; and this will make the Way of using *Christ* more plain.

WHILE *Christ* then says, *I am the Way*; He points out these two Things to us:

First, THAT Man is now estranged from the LORD. He hath departed from GOD; he is revolted and gone. *They are all gone out of the Way*, Rom. iii. 12. *They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking Lyes*, Psalm lviii. 3.

NAY,

NAY, not only so, but we love to wander, and to run away from GOD; as *Jeremiah* complaineth of that wicked People, *Jer. xiv. 10.* Naturally, *with the Dromedary, we traverse our Ways,* *Jer. ii. 23.* and run hither and thither, but never look towards Him. Nay, we are like those spoken of, *Job xxi. 14.* *We desire not the Knowledge of his Ways; we will have none of Him, nor of his Re-proofs.*

OH how sad is this! And yet how is it more sad, that this is not believed, nor once considered! And that it is not believed, is manifest; for,

1. How rare is it to meet with Persons that are not very well pleased and satisfied with themselves, and their Condition? They have no Complaints; they see no Wants, nor Necessities; they wonder what makes Folk complain of their Condition, of their evil Heart, or of their Hazard and Danger; they understand not these Matters.

2. Do we not find People very quiet, and at Rest, though *they remain in the Congregation of the Dead?* *Prov. xxi. 16.* They sleep in a sound Skin, because they see no Hazard. The Thoughts of their Condition never bereave them of one Night's Rest: All is at Peace with them, for *the strong Man keeps the House.*

3. How rare is it to see any Soul broken in Heart, and humbled because of this; who is walking under this, as under a Load; whose Soul is bleeding upon the Consideration of this? Is there any mourning for this?

Secondly, it pointeth out to us this, That *the Way of Man is not in himself,* *Jer. x. 23.* that is, that

that nothing he can do, can or will prove a Way to him to the Father: For *Christ is the Way*, excluding all other Ways. And that Man can do Nothing to help himself into the Way, is clear; for,

1. His Way is Darkness, *Prov. iv. 19.* He knoweth no better, he is satisfied therewith, there he sleepeth and resteth.

2. HE cannot, nor doth desire to return. He hateth to be reformed.

3. YEA, he thinketh himself safe; no Man can convince him to the contrary: The Way he is in seemeth to be right to him, though the End thereof be Death.

4. EVERY Man hath his own particular Way, to which he turneth, *Isaiah liii. 6.* one Thing or other that he is pleased with, and that he thinks will abundantly carry him through: And what these ordinarily are, we shall hear presently.

5. IN this his Way, which yet is a false Way, he trusteth, *Hos. x. 13.* He leaneth upon it, little knowing that it will fail him at length, and that he and his Confidence shall perish.

BUT what are those false and lying Ways which Men weary themselves in, and all in vain, and which they choose and trust unto, and yet are not the Way which will prove safe and sure?

Answer. IT will not be easy to reckon them up: We shall name some that are most ordinary; such as,

1. GOOD Purposes and Resolutions, with which many deceive themselves, supposing that to be all which

which is required: And, alas, all their Purposes are like *Ephraim's Goodness, like the early Cloud, and Morning Dew, that soon vanisheth*: Their Purposes are soon broken off, and soon disappointed, because made without Counsel, *Prov. xv. 22.* Many foolishly rest here, that they have a Mind to do better, and to amend their Ways; and they purpose, after such a Time or such a Time, they shall begin a new Manner of Life: But their Purposes never come to any Effect, and so at length they and their Purposes perish.

2. SOME Convictions. The Word now and then pierceth them so far, and sharp Dispensations from the LORD so far affect their Heart, that they see it is not well with them: But they advance no further; those Convictions either die again, or work no further Change: And, poor Souls, they think, because at such a Sermon or such a Communion they had some such Convictions, therefore all is well; when a *Judas* may have Convictions sharper than ever they had.

3. CONVICTIONS followed with some Sort of Amendment. Some may dreadfully deceive themselves with this, and conclude that all is right with them, and that the Way they are in is safe and sure; because they have had Convictions, which have been so effectual, as to cause them to amend many Things; when, alas! their Way is a Way of Darkness still; it is not *Christ*, they have never come to Him.

4. MANY rest upon their outward Civility and Morality, or negative Holiness: They cannot be challenged for gross Faults, and that is the Way they rest in. Alas! could not a Pharisee say as much as they, *viz. That he was no Extortioner, no*
unjust

unjust Person, nor Adulterer. How many Heathens, as to this, shall outstrip such as profess themselves Christians? And yet they lived and died Strangers to the right Way to Happiness.

5. SOME may attain a Kind of outward Holiness, an outward Performance of the Duties of Religion, such as Hearing, Reading, Prayer, Communicating; and rest there, and yet perish: For that is but their own Way, it is not the right Way.

6. MUCH Knowledge doth deceive many: They think, because they can talk of Religion, speak to Cases of Consciences, handle Places of Scripture, and the like, that therefore all is right with them; when, alas! that is but a slippery Ground to stand upon. The Pharisees sat in *Moses* Seat, and taught sometimes sound Doctrine, and yet were Enemies to *Jesus*. And will not many think to plead themselves into Heaven, by saying, *that they have prophesied in his Name?* Knowledge, I grant, is good, but it is not *Christ*; and so it is not *the Way to the Father*: And many, alas! lean to it, and are deceived at last.

7. A KIND of Seriousness in the Performance of Duties, and in seeking of God, deceiveth many. They think, because they are earnest in what they do, that therefore all is well. Many consider not that there is a secret Hypocrisy, that some may be under and not know it, as well as gross Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, which may be easily observed. Will not *many seek to enter in, that shall not be able?*

8. MANY may deceive themselves with this, that they are looked on by others, (godly discerning Persons and Ministers) as serious Christians,
and

and that they carry so handsomly, that no Man can judge otherwise of them. But, alas, the Day is coming, which will discover many Things; and many one will be deceived both of themselves and others. *Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but whom God approveth, 2 Cor. x. 18.* Therefore Paul exhorts Timothy to study to shew himself approved unto God. Men look only to the Outside, and cannot see into the Heart; but God searcheth the Heart: And it is an easy Matter to deceive Men, but God will not be deceived.

9. SOME may suppose themselves in a safe and sure Way, if they outstrip others in religious Duties, and be much in extraordinary Duties, when, alas, for all that, the Heart may be rotten. The *Pharisee fasted twice a Week*, and yet was but an Enemy to Christ.

10. QUIETNESS of Conscience may deceive some; and they may suppose that all is right with them, because their Heart doth not accuse them of Falshood and Diffimulation in their Way with God or Man. No Doubt that young Man, *Luke xviii. 21.* spoke according to his Judgment, when he said, *All these Things have I observed from my Youth.*

11. A WAY of Zeal may deceive many; who may think their Case unquestionable, because they are zealous for their Way, and as they think their Zeal is pure Zeal for God. Was not Paul, while a Pharisee, very zealous, when out of Zeal to his Way he persecuted the Church? *Phil. iii. 6.* See my Zeal for the LORD, could *Jehu* say, and the Jews had a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge; and Christ tells us, that such as should persecute the Apostles unto Death, would think they did God good Service.

MANY

MANY such false Ways, wherein Men please themselves, might be mentioned. By these every one may see Cause of searching and trying over and over. It is a dreadful Thing to be deceived here, and it is best to put it to a Trial, when there is a Possibility of getting the Matter helped: And many may fear and tremble, when they see they are not yet come the Length of many such as sit down without *Christ*, and lose all their Labour. O! if this could put People to a serious Trial of themselves, and of the Nature of that Way wherein they rest at present.

Thirdly, WE might here observe, that this true and living Way is but one for all. There is but *one Mediator betwixt GOD and Man*, one Mediator for both the Old and New Testament, the Seed of the Woman: Howbeit the LORD's Dispensations with his People, in that one Way, may be various; as his Way with his People *under the Law*, is different from his Way with his People *under the Gospel*; and his Dispensations with individual Believers, whether under the Law or under the Gospel, is not the same in all Things.

AND this should teach us to relinquish our own Ways, and to enter into this one Way: And it should move such as are in this Way to study Unity and Agreement among themselves; and yet not suppose that GOD's Way with them must be in all Things alike. Yea, though the LORD's Way with them be different from his Way with others, and more dark, disconsolate and bitter; yet let them be quiet and silent before the LORD, and acknowledge his Goodness that hath brought them into the one Way, *Jesus Christ*.

BUT, *fourthly*, The main Thing here, and which is obvious, is this, that *Jesus Christ* is the Way to the Father, the one and only Way, the sovereign and excellent Way; and He alone is this Way, there is not another. *Neither is there Salvation in any other: For there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved*, Acts iv. 12.

FOR clearing of this, we shall speak a little to four Things.

1. WHAT is our Case, and what Need we have of a Way.

2. How *Christ* answereth this our Case, and is a fit Way for us.

3. How He alone is this Way.

4. WHAT are the Advantages of this Way.

AND this will make Way for our clearing up, how *Christ* is made Use of as a Way by poor Sinners.

FOR the first of these, our present Case and Necessity, something was spoken of it before; we shall reduce all to these two Heads: The first is our State of Guilt, and Separation from GOD because of Sin and Guilt; the next is our State of Wickedness and Enmity against GOD.

As to the first, we may take Notice;

1. THAT Sin original and actual hath separated us from GOD, and cast us out of his Favour, out of
of

of that Sation of Favour and Friendship which once we were advanced to in *Adam*.

2. THAT we are under GOD's Curse and Wrath, and excommunicated from the Presence of the LORD by a sad, yet just Sentence according to Law; and so are under Death.

As to the next Thing, we may take Notice;

1. THAT we are impure and polluted with Sin and daily Iniquity.

2. THAT we are Ignorant of the right Way of returning into Favour with GOD, seeking to ourselves many Inventions.

3. THAT we are impotent for any good Work or commanded Duty.

4. THAT not only so, but we are unwilling to do any Thing that is Good, or to enter into the Way, when pointed out unto us; yea, we are Enemies to GOD by wicked Works, and have an innate Hatred to all his Ways.

5. WE desire not to be out of the Condition wherein we are: There we love to sleep, and desire not to be awakened.

. WE are under the Power of Satan, who leadeth us out of the Way, yea, and driveth us forward in the wrong Way, to our Perdition.

THESE Things are plain and undeniable, and need no further Confirmation.

FOR the *second*, how *Christ* answereth this our Case. He is a Way to us, to help us out of both these, both out of our State of Guilt and Separation, and out of our State of Wickedness and Enmity.

AND, first, He helpeth us out of our State of Guilt and Separation.

1. By taking away our Guilt and Sin, being *made Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD in Him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. He hath filled the great Gap betwixt GOD and us with his Body, and hath made of it, as it were, a Bridge, by which we may go over unto the Father: We enter now into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh, Heb. x. 19, 20. We are now brought near by his Blood, Eph. ii. 13. so that through Him we are restored again to Friendship with GOD, and made one with Him; for *Christ* the Mediator has made both one, reconciling Jews and Gentiles unto GOD in one Body by the Cross, having slain the Enmity, ii. 16.

2. By taking away the Curse and Wrath that was due to us, being *made a Curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. so that He is become our Peace, and thro' Him we have Access by one Spirit unto the Father, and are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of GOD, Eph. ii. 14, 18, 19. He is set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, Rom. iii. 25. 1 John ii. 2. and iv. 10. By Him have we now received the Atonement, Rom. v. 11.

NEXT, He helpeth us out of our State of Wickedness and Enmity.

1. By

1. BY taking away our Impurity and Unclean-
ness, by washing us and cleansing us in his Blood,
Eph. v. 26, 27. Col. i. 22. having purchased
Grace for us, *Eph. i. 3.* we are blessed with all
spiritual Blessings in Him. He applieth his Merits,
and layeth the Foundation of Grace and Holiness
in the Soul, and carrieth on the Work of Mortifi-
cation and Vivification; and so, killing the old
Man by his Spirit, both meritoriously and efficient-
ly He cleanseth and washeth. Hence we are said
to be *baptized with Him in his Death*, and *buried*
with Him by Baptism into Death, that we should
walk in Newness of Life: And so our old Man is
crucified with Him, that the Body of Sin might be de-
stroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin, *Rom.*
vi. 3, 4, 6. And for our daily Infirmities, where-
by we pollute ourselves, his Blood is a Fountain
opened to the House of David and to the Inhabi-
tants of Jerusalem for Sin and Uncleanness, and to
this Fountain He bringeth, by the Spirit of Repen-
tance, which He as an exalted Prince, bestoweth
and by Faith. So, *1 John ii. 1.* *If any Man sin,*
we have an Advocate with the Father.

2. As for our Ignorance and Blindness, He tak-
eth that away, being given for a Light to the Gen-
tles, *Isa. xlii. 6.* and *xlix. 6.* *Luke ii. 32.* He is
sent to open the blind Eyes, *Isa. xlii. 7.* to bring
out the Prisoners from their dark Prisons. So that
such as walk in Darkness see a great Light; and
they that dwell in the Land of the Shadow of
Death, upon them the Light hath shined.

3. HE is qualified for taking away our Impoten-
cy, so that through Him we can do all Things.
When we are weak, we are strong in Him, who is
our Strength, and liveth in us. Hence He work-

eth in us both to will and to do of his own good Pleasure.

4. He also taketh away our natural Aversness, Unwillingness, and Hatred of his Ways, making his People *willing in the Day of his Power*, He taketh away *the Enmity that is in us*, and reconcileth us to GOD, and to his Ways, that our Hearts do sweetly comply with them, and we become most willing and glad to walk in them; yea, and *to run the Way of his Commandments thro' his enlarging our Hearts*, Psal. cxix. 32.

5. He likewise taketh away that Desire and Willingness which we have to lie still in our natural Condition; by convincing us of the dreadful Hazard thereof, thro' the Spirit of Conviction, whereby He convinceth the World of it, and circumciseth their Ear to hear, and maketh them willing to hearken to the Counsel of GOD.

6. As for the Power and Dominion of Satan. He breaketh that, by *leading Captivity captive*, Eph. iv. 8. *Psal. lxviii. 18. and spoiling the strong Man's House: For He is come to destroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8. *and He spoileth Principalities and Powers*, ii. Col. 15. Thus, as Captain of Salvation, He leadeth them out as a Conqueror; having paid the Price, He delivereth also by Power and Authority from the Hand of this Jaylor.

AND thus we see how He answereth our Case, and is a fit Way for us:

THE *third* Particular, That he alone is this Way, and answereth our Case herein; is clear and manifest, confirmed by the Experience of all Generations,

Generations, and the Disappointments of Fools, who have been seeking other Ways. Angels in Heaven cannot do our Business; they cannot satisfy Justice for us, nor have they any Power over our Heart to turn it as they will: The Blood of Bulls and Goats cannot do it; for the Apostle tells us, that is impossible that that should take away Sin. That Blood shed according to the Law did cleanse ceremonially, but it is only the Blood of *Jesus*, typified by that, which cleanseth really: So that we are sanctified thro' the Offering of the Body of *Jesus Christ* once for all, *Heb. x. 10.* No Pains or Labour of ours can avail here: The LORD will not be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil; He will not take our First-born for our Transgression, nor the Son of our Body for the Sin of our Soul; *Mic. vi. 7.* Ordinances and Means will not do it, nor any Invention of our own: *No Man can by any Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ransom for him; for the Redemption of the Soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.* He alone hath laid down the Price: All our Sufferings, Prayers, Tears, Labours, Penances, and the like, signify nothing here; they cannot satisfy Justice for one Sin.

As to the *fourth* Particular, *viz.* the Singularity of this Way; these Things make it manifest.

1. THIS is such a Way as can discover itself, and make itself known to the erring Traveller: *Christ Jesus* is such a Way as can say to the wandering Soul, *This is the Way, walk in it, Isa. xxx. 21.* No Way can do this. This is comfortable.

2. THIS

2. THIS Way can not only discover itself to the wandring Traveller, but also can bring Folk into it. *Christ* can bring Souls unto Himself, when they are running on in their wandring Condition. He can move their Heart to turn into the right Way, put Grace in their Soul, begin Resolutions in them, and sow the Seed of Faith; and so stay their Course which they were violently pursuing, and make them consider what they are doing. As the former was good News to poor blind Creatures that were wandring and knew not whether they were going, so this is good News to poor Souls, that find their Hearts inclining to wander, and loving to go astray.

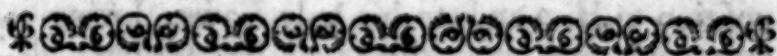
3. THIS Way can cause us to walk in it. If we be rebellious and obstinate, He can command with Authority; for He is given for a *Leader* and a *Commander*, Isa. lv. 4. How sweet should this be to the Soul, that is weighted with a stubborn, untractable Heart, that He is a King, Governor and Commander, can with Authority draw, or drive, and cause us to follow and run?

4. THIS Way is Truth, as well as the Way: so that the Soul that keepeth in it is safe, no wandring here: *The way faring Men, though Fools, shall not err in this Way*, Isa, xxxv. 8.

5. THIS Way is also Life, and so can revive the fainting and weary Traveller: *He giveth Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might, He increaseth Strength: Yea, He renews their Strength, and makes them mount up with Wings as Eagles, and not be weary, and walk and not faint*, Isa. xl. 29, 31. and so He giveth Legs to the Traveller. *Yea, He carrieth the Lambs in his Bosom*, Isa. xl. 11. O who would not walk in this Way? What

can

can discourage the Man that walketh here? What can he fear? No Way can quicken or refresh the weary Man; this Way can do it: Yea, it can quicken one that is as dead, and cause him to march on with fresh Alacrity and Vigour.



C H A P. IV.

How Christ is made Use of for Justification as a Way.

WHAT *Christ* hath done to procure our Justification before GOD, is mentioned already, *viz.* That He stood in the Room of Sinners, engaging for them, undertaking and at length paying down the Ransom; becoming Sin, or a Sacrifice for Sin, and a Curse for them, and so laying down his Life to satisfy Divine Justice: And this He hath made known in the Gospel, calling Sinners to to accept of Him as their only Mediator, and to rest upon Him for Life and Salvation.

Now, for such as would make Use of *Christ* as the Way to the Father in the Point of Justification, these Things are requisite.

1st, THERE must be a Conviction of Sin and Misery; a Conviction of *original Guilt*, whereby we are banished out of GOD's Presence and Favour, and are in a State of Enmity and Death, are *come short of the Glory of GOD*, *Rom. iii. 23.* becoming Dead, or under the Sentence of Death, thro' the Offence of one, *Rom. v. 15.* being made Sinners

Sinners by one Man's Disobedience, Verse 19. and therefore under the reigning Power of Death, Verse 17. and under that Judgment which came upon all Men to Condemnation, Verse 18. and of original innate Wickedness, whereby the Heart is filled with Enmity against God, and is a Hatred of Him and of all his Ways; standing in full Opposition to Him and to his holy Laws; loving to contradict and resist him in all his Actings; despising and undervaluing all his Condescensions of Love; obstinately refusing his Offers of Mercy, and peremptorily persisting in Rebellion and Heart-opposition; not only not accepting his Kindnesses, but trampling them under Foot also, there must be a Conviction of our *actual Transgressions*, whereby we have corrupted our Ways yet more, run further from God, brought on more Wrath upon our Souls, according to that Sentence, *Cursed is every one that abideth not in all that is written in the Law to do it*, Gal. iii. 10. What Way this Conviction is begun and carried on in the Soul, I cannot now stand to explain: Only in short know, it is a Heart-reaching Conviction, not general and notional, but particular, plain and pinching, affecting the Heart with Fear and Terror, making the Soul seriously to mind this Matter, to be taken up with the Thoughts of it, and earnestly to cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?*

2dly, THERE must be some Measure of Humiliation. Under this Conviction the Man is bowed down and made mute before God; no more boasting of his Goodness; no high Thoughts of his Righteousness, for all are now to be looked on as *filthy Rags*. *What Things were as Gain before to the Soul, must now be counted Loss*, yea, and as *Dung*. The Man must be cast down, and far from high Thoughts of himself, or any Thing he ever

ever did, or can do; *For the LORD resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble,* Jam. 4. 6.

3dly, THERE must be a Despair of Help or Relief out of this Condition by ourselves, or any Thing we can do; a Conviction of the Unprofitableness of all Things under the Sun for our Relief; no Expectation of Help from our supposed good Heart, good Purposes, good Deeds, Works of Charity, many Prayers, Commendation of others, sober and harmless walking, or any Thing else within us; or without us that is not *Christ*: For, so long as we have the least Hope or Expectation of doing our own Business without *Christ*, we will never come to Him. Our Heart hangeth so after the old Way of Salvation thro' Works, that we cannot yield to any other. Such is our Antipathy at the Way of Salvation thro' a crucified *Christ*, that we would choose any Way but that, cost what it would: Therefore, before we can heartily close with *Christ* and accept of Him, we must be put from those Refuges of Lies, and see that there is nothing but a Disappointment written on them all; that all our Prayers, Fasting, Cries, Duties, Reformations, Sufferings, good Wishes, good Deeds, are nothing in his Eyes but so many Provocations to the Eyes of his Jealousy, and so, further Causes of our Misery.

4thly, THERE must be a deliberate and resolute relinquishing all those Things in ourselves, on which our Heart is ready to dote. The Man, being convinced of the Vanity of all Things by which he hath been hoping for Salvation, must now turn his back upon them, quit them with Purpose of Heart, and say to them, *Get you hence*. This abandoning of all our former false Props and Subterfuges must be resolute, over much Opposition

tion within, from the natural Inclinations of the Heart; and much Opposition without, from *Satan's* insnaring Suggestions: It must be a real, rational Act of the Soul, upon solid and thorough Conviction of their Unprofitableness, yea, of their Dangerousness and Destructiveness.

5thly, THERE must be some Knowledge of the Nature of the Gospel-covenant, and of the Way which now GOD hath chosen whereby to glorify his Grace in the Salvation of poor Sinners: That GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thought good, for the Glory of free Grace and Wisdom, in a Way of Justice and Mercy, to send *Jesus Christ* to assume Man's Nature, and so become GOD and Man in two distinct Natures, and one Person for ever; and to become under the Law, to undergo the Curse thereof, and to die the cursed Death of the Cross, to satisfy Justice, and to pay the Ransom for our Redemption: So *the LORD* laid on Him, or caused to meet together on Him, *the Iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6. So in due Time He bore our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows: He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon Him: He was cut off out of the Land of the Living, and stricken for the Transgression of his People: He made his Soul an Offering for Sin, and bore the Iniquities of his People. Pouring out his Soul unto Death; He bore the Sin of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors, Isa. liii. 4, 5, 10, 11, 12. so that what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the *Flesh*, GOD sending his own Son in the Likeness of sinful *Flesh*, for Sin (or by a Sacrifice for Sin) condemned Sin in the *Flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, Verse 4. Thus He made Him Sin, (or a Sacrifice for Sin) that we might become Righteous

rious, 2 Cor. v. 21. And He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without Spot to GOD, Heb. ix. 14. And his Ownself bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. There must, I say, be some Knowledge of this great Mystery, wherein is declared the manifold Wisdom of GOD, and with the noble Design of GOD in sending his Son after this Manner, to die the Death, that condemned Sinners might live, and return to the Bosom of GOD, as redeemed, not with Gold, or Silver, or corruptible Things; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot, 1 Pet. xix. 18. And, being so redeemed by Blood, to become Kings and Priests unto GOD! The Man must not be ignorant of this, else all will be in vain. I do not determine how distinct and full this Knowledge must be; but sure there must be so much Knowledge of it, as will give the Soul Ground of Hope, and Expectation of Salvation by this Way.

6thly, THERE must be a Persuasion of the Sufficiency, Compleatness and Satisfactoriness of the Way of Salvation thro' this crucified Mediator; else the Soul will not be induced to leave its other Courses, and betake itself to this alone. He must be sure that Salvation is only to be had this Way, and that undoubtedly it will be had this Way; that so with Confidence he may cast himself on this Way, and sweetly sing in Hope: And therefore he must believe, that Christ is really GOD as well as Man, and a true Man as well as GOD; that He is fully furnished for the Work of Redemption, having the Spirit given to Him without Measure, and endued fully and richly with all Qualifications fitting Him for all our Necessities, and enabling Him to save to the uttermost all that come unto GOD by Him, Heb. vii. 25. That He is made of GOD

to us *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification*, 1 Cor. i. 30. That all Power in Heaven and Earth is given unto Him, Matt. xxviii. 18. That all Things are put under his Feet, and that He is given to be the Head over all Things to the Church, Eph. i. 22. That in Him dwelleth all Fulness, Col. i. 19. That in Him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, Col. ii. 3. Yea, That in Him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily; who is the Head of all Principality and Power, Verses 9, 10.

7thly, THE Soul must know, that He is not only an able and all-sufficient Mediator, but that He is willing and ready to save all that will come: For all the preceding Particulars will but increase his Sorrow, so long as he supposeth, that he hath no Part in that Redemption. Therefore it is necessary, that the Soul conceive, not only a Possibility, but also a Probability of Help this Way; and that the Dispensation of the Gospel of Grace, and Offer of this good News to him, speak out so much; that the Patience of God waiting long, and his Goodness renewing the Offers, confirmeth this; that his serious Pressing, his strong Motives on the one Hand, and his sharp Threatnings on the other, his reiterated Commands, his expressed Sorrow and Grief over such as would not come to Him, his Upbraidings of such as obstinately refuse, put his Willingness to save such as will come to Him out of all Question: Yea, his obviating of Objections, and taking all Excuses out of their Mouth, maketh the Case plain and manifest; so that such as will not come, are left without Excuse, and have no Impediment lying in the Way but their own Unwillingness.

8thly, THE Man must know upon what Terms and Conditions *Christ* offereth Himself in the Gospel,

pel, viz. upon Condition of Believing in Him; and that no other Way can we be made Partakers of the good Things purchased by *Christ*, but by accepting of Him as He is offered in the Gospel, that is to say, freely, without Price or Money; absolutely, without Reservation; wholly, and for all Ends; for 'till this be known, there will be no closing with *Christ*; and, 'till there be a closing with *Christ*, there is no Advantage to be had by Him. The Soul must be married to Him, as an Husband; fixed to Him, as the Branches to the Tree; united to Him, as the Members to the Head; become one with Him, *one Spirit*. The Soul must close with Him for all Things, adhere to Him upon all Hazards, take Him and the sharpest Cross that followeth Him: Now, I say, the Soul must be acquainted with these Conditions; for it must act deliberately and rationally here. Covenanting with *Christ* is a grave Business, and requireth Deliberation, full Purpose of Heart, and Satisfaction of Soul; and therefore the Man must be acquainted with the Conditions of the New Covenant.

9thly, THERE must be a Satisfaction with the Terms of the Gospel, and the Heart must actually close with *Christ* as He is offered in the Gospel. The Heart must *open to Him*, and take Him in, *Rev. iii. 20.* The Soul must embrace and *receive Him*, *John i. 12.* The Man must take Him as his LORD and Master, King, Priest and Prophet; must give up himself to Him as his Leader and Commander, and resolve to follow Him in all Things: For, 'till this be done, there is no Union with *Christ*; and, 'till there be an Union with *Christ*, there is no partaking of the Fruits of his Redemption, as to Justification; no Pardon, no Acceptance, no Access to the Favour of God,

nor Peace, nor Joy in the Holy Ghost; no getting of the Conscience sprinkled, no Intimation of Love or Favour from GOD.

10thly, THERE must be a resting upon Him and on his perfect Sacrifice. The Soul must sit down here as satisfied, and acquiesce in this compleat Mediation. This is to *believe on Him*, to *rest on Him*, *John* iii. 18. *1 Pet.* ii. 6. as an all-sufficient Help. This is to cast the Burden of a broken Covenant, of a guilty Conscience, of deserved Wrath, of the Curse of the Law, upon Him, that He may bear away those Evils from us: This is to *put on the LORD JESUS* (in Part) *Rom.* xiii. 14. to cover ourselves with his Righteousness from the Face of Justice, to stand in this Armour of Proof against the Accusations of *Satan*, and an evil Conscience: This is to flee to Him as our City of Refuge, that we may be safe from the Avenger of Blood: This is to make Him our Refuge from the Storm of GOD's Anger, and a Shadow from the Heat of his Wrath, *Isa.* xxv. 4. And our *Hiding-place from the Wind*, and a *Covert from the Tempest*, and as the *Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land*, *Isa.* xxxii. 2. When we hide ourselves in Him as He that hath fully satisfied Justice, and desire to *be found in Him alone*, *not having our own Righteousness which is of the Law*, but that *which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith*, *Phil.* iii. 9. This is to lay our Hand on the Head of the Sacrifice, when we rest on this Sacrifice, and expect Salvation from it alone: This is to cast ourselves in *Christ's Arms*, as peremptorily resolving to go no other Way to the Father, and to plead no other Righteousness before GOD's Bar but *Christ's*. That is Faith, yea, justifying Faith.

THUS

THUS then is *Christ* made Use of as the Way to the Father, in the Point of Justification, when the poor awakened Sinner, convinced of his Sin and Misery, of his own Inability to help himself, of the Insufficiency of all Means beside *Christ*; of *Christ's* All-sufficiency, Readiness and Willingness to help; of the Equity and Reasonableness of the Conditions on which He is offered, and Life thro' Him; is now content and fully satisfied with this Way, actually renouncing all other Ways whatsoever; and doth with Heart and Hand embrace *Jesus Christ*, and take Him as He is offered in the Gospel, to make Use of Him for all Things, to rest upon Him in all Hazards; and particularly to refuge himself under his Wings, and to rest there with Satisfaction and Delight; and hide himself from the Wrath of God, and all Accusations.

THIS is a Business of great Concernment; yet many are not much troubled about it, deceiving themselves with foolish Imaginations: For,

1. THEY think they were Believers all their Days; they never doubted of God's Grace and Good-will; they had always a good Heart for God, tho' they never knew what an awakened Conscience, or Sense of the Wrath of God, meant.

2. OR they think, because God is merciful, He will not be so severe, as to stand upon all those Things that Ministers require; forgetting that He is a just God, and a God of Truth, that will do according to what He hath said.

3. OR they suppose it is an easy Matter to believe; not considering, that no less Power, than

that which raised *Christ* again from the Dead, will work up the Heart unto Faith.

4. OR they resolve that they will do it afterward, at some more convenient Season: Not perceiving the cunning Sleight of *Satan* in this, nor considering that Faith is not in their Power, but the Gift of God; and that if they lay not Hold on the Call of God, but harden their Hearts in their Day, God may judicially blind them, so that these Things shall be hid from their Eyes.

To encourage poor Souls to come unto *Christ*, all Things are so well ordered in the Gospel, that nothing occurreth, that can in the least prove a Stumbling-Block, or a just Ground of Excuse for their forbearing to believe; all Objections possible are obviated to such as are but willing: The Way is cast up, and all Stones of Stumbling cast out of it; so that such as will not come can pretend no Excuse. They cannot object the Greatness of their Sins; for the greater their Sins are, they have the greater Need of one who is sent to take away Sin, and whose Blood purgeth from all Sins. What great Sinner did He ever refuse, that was willing to be saved by Him? Is there any Clause in all the Gospel excluding great Sinners? Nor need they object their Unworthiness; for He doth all freely, for the Glory of his free Grace: None ever got any Good of Him for their Worth; for no Man ever had any Worth. Nor need they object their long refusing, and resisting many Calls; for He will make such as are willing welcome at the eleventh Hour. Him that cometh He will in no Case put away. Nor can they object the Difficulty or Impossibility of Believing; for that is *Christ's* Work: He is the *Author and Finisher of Faith*, *Heb. xii. 2.* Can they not with Confidence cast them-

themselves upon Him? Yet if they can hunger and thirst for Him, and look to Him, He will accept of that: *Look to Me* (says He) *and be saved, Isa. xlv. 22.* If they cannot look to Him, nor hunger and thirst for Him; yet, if they be willing, all is well. Are they willing that *Christ* save them in his Way, and therefore willingly give themselves over to Him, and are content that *Christ* by his Spirit work more Hunger in them, and *work both to will and to do according to his good Pleasure?* It is well.

BUT it will be said, That the Terms and Conditions on which He offered Himself are hard. *Ans.* I grant the Terms are hard to Flesh and Blood; but to such as are willing to be saved, so as GOD may be most glorified, the Terms are easy, most rational and satisfying: For,

1. WE are required to take Him only for our Mediator, and to join none with Him, and to mix nothing with Him. Corrupt Nature is averse from this, and would at least mix something of Self with Him, and not rest on *Christ* only: Corrupt Nature would not have the Man wholly denying himself, and following *Christ* only; and hence many lose themselves, and lose all; because, with the *Galatians*, they would mix the Law and the Gospel together, do something themselves for Satisfaction of Justice, and take *Christ* for the rest. Now, the LORD will have all the Glory, as good Reason is, and will have none to share with Him: He will give of his Glory to none. And is not this rational and easy? What can be objected against this?

2. WE are required to take Him wholly, that He may be a compleat Mediator to us, as a Prophet

phet to teach, as a King to subdue our Lusts, to cause us to walk in his Ways, as well as a Priest to satisfy Justice for us, to die and interceed for us. Is it not Reason that we take Him as God hath made Him for us? Is there any Thing in Him to be refused? And is there any Thing in Him, which we have no Need of? Is there not all the Reason then in the World for this, that we take Him wholly? And what Stumbling-block is here?

3. WE are required to take Him freely, *without Money and without Price, Isaiah lv. 1.* For He will not be bought any Manner of Way: That free Grace may be free Grace, therefore He will give all freely. True it is, Corruption would be at Buying, though it have Nothing to lay out: Pride will not stoop to a free Gift. But can any say the Terms are hard, when all is offered freely?

4. WE are required to take Him absolutely, without any mental Reservation. Some would willingly quit all, but one or two Lusts; they would deny themselves in many Things, but they would still most willingly keep a Back-Door open to some beloved Lust or other. And who seeth not what Double-dealing is here? And what Reason can plead for this Double-dealing? Corruption, it is true, will think this hard; but no Man can rationally say, that this is a just Ground of Discouragement to any, or a sufficient Ground to warrant them to stay away from *Christ*, seeing they cannot be supposed sincerely to desire Redemption from any Sin, who would not desire Redemption from every Sin. He that loveth any known Lust, and would not willingly be delivered therefrom, hath no real Hatred at any Lust as such, nor Desire to be saved; for one such Lust would be his Death.

5. WE are to take Him for all Necessities, that is, with a Resolution to make Use of Him as our all-sufficient Mediator. And is not this most reasonable? Ought we not to take Him for all the Ends for which God hath appointed Him, and offered Him to us? What then can any suppose to lie here, which should scare a Soul from laying Hold upon Him? Nay, should not this be looked upon as a very great Encouragement? And should not we bless the LORD, that hath provided such an all-sufficient Mediator?

6. WE are to take Him, and all the Crosses that may attend our taking or following Him: We must *take up our Cross*, be it what it will, that He thinketh good to appoint for us; *for he that taketh not up his Cross, and followeth not after Him, is not worthy of Him.* I know, Flesh and Blood will take this for a hard Saying; but they that consider *Christ* will bear the heaviest End of the Cross, yea all of it, and support them by his Spirit while they are under it; and how *He will suffer none to go his Errand upon their own Charges, but will be with them when they go through Fire and Water*, Isaiah xliii. 2. *so that they shall suffer no Loss, neither shall the Waters overflow them, nor the Fire kindle upon them;* and that *he who loseth his Life for Christ's Sake, and the Gospel's, shall save it*, Mark viii. 35. Yea, that they shall receive an Hundred-fold for all their Losses, Matt. xix. 29. *And that even with Persecution,* Mark x. 30. *and in the World to come eternal Life:* They, I say, who consider this, will see no Discouragement here, nor Ground of Complaint; nay, they will account it their Glory to suffer any Loss for *Christ's Sake*.

7. HENCE it followeth, that we are to take Him, so as to avouch Him, and his Cause and Interest,
on

on all Hazards, stand to his Truth, and not be ashamed of Him in a Day of Trial. *Confession of Him must be made with the Mouth, as with the Heart we must believe,* Rom. x. 9. Let Corruption speak against this what it will, because it is always desirous to keep the Skin whole; yet Reason cannot but say but it is equitable, especially seeing He hath said, that *whosoever confesseth Him before Men, He will confess them before his Father which is in Heaven,* Matt. x. 32.

HENCE then we see, that there is nothing in all the Conditions on which He offereth Himself to us, that can give the least Ground in Reason why a poor Soul should draw back, and be unwilling to accept of this noble Offer.

BUT there is one main Objection, which may trouble some, and that is, They cannot believe: Faith being the Gift of God, it must be wrought in them: How then can they go to God for this, and make Use of *Christ* for this End?

To this I would say these Things:

1. IT is true, that *Faith is the Gift of God*, and that it is He alone who *worketh in us both to will and to do.* And it is a great Matter, and no small Advancement, to have a thorough Conviction of this our Impotency; for thereby the Soul will be brought to despair of Salvation in itself, which is no small Advantage to a poor Soul that would be saved.

2. THOUGH Faith be not in our Power, yet it is our Duty. Our Impotency to perform our Duty, doth not loose our Obligation to the Duty; so that our not believing is our Sin, and for this God

may

may justly condemn us: His Wrath abideth on all who believe not in his Son *Jesus*, and will not accept of the Offer of Salvation through the crucified Mediator. And though Faith, as all other Acts of Grace, be efficiently the Work of the Spirit, yet it is formally our Work: We believe, but it is the Spirit that worketh Faith in us.

3. THE ordinary Way of the Spirit's working Faith in us, is by pressing Home the Duty upon us, whereby we are brought to a despairing in ourselves, and to a looking out to Him, whose Grace alone it is that can work it in the Soul.

4. NOT only hath *Christ* purchased this Grace of Faith, and all other Graces necessary for our Salvation; but GOD hath committed to Him the Administration and actual Dispensation of all those Graces which the Redeemed stand in Need of. Hence *He is a Prince, exalted to give Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins*, Acts v. 31. *All Power in Heaven and Earth is committed unto Him*, Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Hence He is called *the Author and Finisher of Faith*, Heb. xii. 2. And He telleth his Disciples, *John* xiv. 13, 14. that *whatever they shall ask in his Name, He will do it*. He is made *Prince and Saviour, having all Judgment committed unto Him*, *John* v. 22. and *He is LORD of all*.

5. HEREUPON, the Sinner being convinced of his lost Condition through Sin, of an utter Impossibility of helping himself out of that State of Death, of *Christ's* All-sufficiency and Willingness to save all that come to Him, and of his own Inability to believe or come to Him for Life and Salvation, and so despairing in himself, is to look out to *Jesus* the Author of eternal Salvation, the Foundation and chief Corner-Stone, *the Author and Finisher of Faith*:

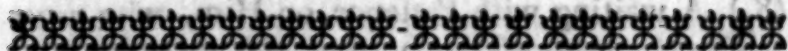
Faith: I say, the Sinner being thus convinced, is thus to look out to *Jesus*; not that that Conviction is any proper Qualification, pre-requisite as necessary, either to prepare, dispose and fit for Faith, or far less to merit any Manner of Way, or bring on Faith; but because this is *Christ's* Method to bring a Soul to Faith by this Conviction, to the Glory of his Grace. The Soul naturally being averse from *Christ*, and utterly unwilling to accept of that Way of Salvation, must be reduced to that Strait, that it shall see that it must either accept of this Offer, or die. As the Whole needeth not a Physician, so *Christ* is come to save only that which is lost; and his Method is to convince the World of Sin, in the first Place, and then of Righteousness.

6. THIS looking to *Jesus* for Faith, comprehendeth these Things: (1.) The Soul's Acknowledgment of the Necessity of Faith, to the End it may partake of *Christ*, and his Merits. (2.) The Soul's Satisfaction with that Way of partaking of *Christ*, by resting upon Him by Faith. (3.) A Conviction of the Unbelief and Stubbornness of the Heart; or a seeing of his own Impotency, yea, and Unwillingness to believe. (4.) A Persuasion that *Christ* can over-master the Infidelity and Wickedness of the Heart. (5.) A Hope, or a Half-hope, (to speak so) that *Christ*, who is willing to save all poor Sinners, and hath said that He will put none away in any Case that cometh, will have Pity upon him at length. (6.) A Resolution to lie at his Door, 'till He come with Life, 'till He quicken, 'till He unite the Soul to Himself. (7.) A lying open to the Breathings of his Spirit, by guarding against every Thing (so far as we can) that may grieve or provoke Him, and waiting on Him in all the Ordinances He hath appointed for begetting of Faith;

Faith; such as, reading the Scriptures, hearing the Word, Conference with godly Persons, and Prayer. (8.) A waiting with Patience on Him, who *never said to the House of Jacob, Seek Me in vain*; still crying and looking to Him, who hath commanded the Ends of the Earth to look to Him; and waiting for Him, who waiteth to be gracious; remembering that they are all blessed that wait for Him, and that *there is much Good prepared for them that wait for Him*, *Isaiah lxiv. 4.*

7. THE Sinner should assay this believing in *Christ*, and set about it, as he can, seriously, heartily and willingly; yea, and resolutely over much Opposition, and many Discouragements, looking to Him who must help, yea, and work the whole Work: For GOD worketh in and with Man, as a rational Creature. The Soul then should set the Willingness it findeth on Work, and wait for more; and as the LORD is pleased to commend by his Spirit the Way of Grace more unto the Soul, and to warm the Heart with Love to it, and a Desire after it, strike the Iron while it is hot; and, looking to Him for Help, seize *Christ*, though with a trembling Hand, and subscribe its Name, though with Fear and Doubting, remembering that He who worketh to will, must work the Deed also, *Phil. ii. 13.*

8. THE Soul assaying thus to believe in *Christ's* Strength, and to creep when it cannot walk or run, should hold fast what it hath attained, and resolve never to recall any Consent or Half-consent it hath given to the Bargain, but still look forward, hold on, wrestle against Unbelief; entertain every good Motion of the Spirit for this End, and never admit of any Thing that may quench its Longings, Desires, or Expectation.



C H A P. V.

*How CHRIST is to be made Use of, as a Way,
for Sanctification in general.*

HAVING shewn how a poor Soul, lying under the Burden of Sin and Wrath, is to make Use of *Jesus Christ* for Justification, and so to make Use of Him, and apply Him, as *He is made of GOD to us Righteousness*: We come to shew how a justified Soul shall further make Use of *Christ* for Sanctification; this being a Particular about which they are often much exercised and perplexed.

THAT we may therefore in some Measure, thro' the Help of his Light and Grace, clear up this great Truth, we shall first speak a little to it in the general.

BEFORE we speak of the Matter in general, it should be remembered, That the Person who only can make Use of *Christ* for Sanctification, is one that hath made Use of Him already for Righteousness: For one who is a Stranger to *Christ*, hath no Access to *Christ* for Sanctification. One must first be united to *Christ* by Faith, before he can draw Virtue from Him for perfecting Holiness; he must first be in Him, before He can grow up in Him, or bring forth Fruit in Him. And therefore the first Thing that Souls should go about, should be to get an Union with *Christ*, and be cloathed with his Righteousness

Righteousness by Faith; and then they have a Right to all his Benefits.

THIS premised, we come to speak something in the general of Believers using *Christ*, as *made of GOD to us Sanctification*: And, for this End, we shall only speak a little to two Things: *First*, We shall shew upon what Account it is, that *Christ* is called *our Sanctification*, or *made of GOD to us Sanctification*, as the Apostle's Phrase is, *1 Cor. i. 30.* or what *Christ* hath done, as Mediator, to begin and carry on to Perfection the Work of Sanctification in the Soul. And, *Secondly*, How the Soul is to make Use of what *Christ* hath done, for this End, *that it may grow in Grace, and perfect Holiness in the Fear of GOD.*

As to the *First*, Though the Work of Sanctification be formally ours, yet it is wrought by another Hand as the principal efficient Cause, even by the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is said to *purge the Branches, that they may bring forth more Fruit*, *John xv. 1, 2.* Hence we are said to be sanctified by GOD the Father, *Jude Verse 1.* The Son is also called the Sanctifier, *Heb. ii. 11.* *He sanctifieth and cleanseth the Church, with the washing of Water by the Word*, *Eph. v. 26.* The Spirit is also said to sanctify, *2 Thess. ii. 13.* *1 Pet. i. 2.* *Rom. xv. 16.* Hence we are said to be *washed and sanctified by the Spirit of GOD*, *1 Cor. vi. 11.*

BUT, more particularly, we are said to be *sanctified in Christ*, *1 Cor. i. 2.* and He is *made of GOD to us Sanctification*, *1 Cor. i. 30.* Let us then see in what Sense this may be true: And,

1. HE hath by his Death and Blood procured, that this Work of Sanctification shall be wrought and carried on: For *He suffered without the Gate, that He might sanctify the People with his own Blood,* Heb. xiii. 12. Thus our Sanctification is the Fruit of his Death, and purchased by his Blood: *He gave Himself for his Church, that He might sanctify it,* Eph. v. 25, 26.

2. HENCE it followeth, that our *old Man is crucified with Christ, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed,* Rom. vi. 6. So that this old Tyrant, that oppresseth the People of GOD, hath got his Death's Wounds in the Crucifixion of *Christ*, and shall never recover his former Vigour and Activity, to oppress and bear down the People of GOD, as he did.

3. HIS Resurrection is a Pledge of this Sanctification: For as He died as a publick Person, so He rose again as a publick Person: *We are buried with Him by Baptism, that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we should walk in Newness of Life,* Rom. vi. 4. And Believers are said to be *planted together with Him in the Likeness of his Resurrection,* Verse 5. And they *shall live with Him,* Verse 8. *And therefore they are to reckon themselves alive unto GOD, through Jesus Christ our LORD,* Verse 11. *We are raised up together,* Eph. ii. 6.

4. THIS Sanctification is promised in the Covenant of Grace, *Jer. xxxiii. 8. I will cleanse them from all their Iniquity. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean: From all your Filthiness and from all your Idols will I cleanse you.* Now, all the Promises of the Covenant of Grace are confirmed to us in the Mediator:

For

For in Him all the Promises are Yea and Amen,
2 Cor. i. 20.

YEA, through Him are Believers made Partakers of the Divine Nature, which is a growing Thing, young Glory in the Soul, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. *According as his Divine Power hath given unto us all Things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be Partakers of the Divine Nature.*

5. THE Spirit is promised to cause us to walk in his Statutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Now, all these Promises are made good to us in Christ, who is the Cautioner of the Covenant: Yea, He hath gotten now the dispensing and giving out of the rich Promises of the Covenant committed unto Him, so as He is the great Lord Treasurer and Administrator of the glorious purchased Blessings.

6. HE standeth in Relation to Believers as a Vine, or a Root, in which they grow as Branches; so that, by abiding in Him, living by Faith in Him, and drawing Sap from Him, they bring forth Fruit, John xv. 1, 2, 4, 5. Their Stock of Grace is in Him the Root; and He communicateth Sap and Life unto his Branches, whereby they grow, flourish, and bring forth Fruit to the Glory of GOD.

7. WHEN we defile ourselves with new Transgressions and Failings, He hath provided a Fountain for us to wash in, a Fountain opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, for Sin and for Uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1. And this Fountain is his Blood, which cleanseth from all Sin, Heb. ix. 14. 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5.

8. HE is set before us as a Copy and Pattern, that *we should walk even as He walked*, 1 John ii. 6. *He left us an Example, that we should follow his Steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. But we should beware to separate this Consideration from the preceding, as Antichristian Socinians do, who will have *Christ* only to be a Copy.

9. As He hath purchased, so hath He appointed Ordinances, for the laying the Foundation, and carrying on this Work of Sanctification: Both Word and Sacraments are appointed for that. The Word to convert and to confirm, *John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth*, said *Christ*. The Word is given as the Rule; and also through the Means thereof is Life and Strength conveyed to the Soul, *to perfect Holiness in the Fear of GOD*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. And the Sacraments are given to strengthen and confirm the Soul in the Ways of GOD.

10. As He hath laid down strong Encouragements to his Followers to hold on in the Way of Holiness, *many great and precious Promises*, by which they are encouraged *to cleanse themselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit*, and many Motives to hold on; so hath He rolled Difficulties out of the Way, whether they be within us or without us, and thereby made the Way easy and pleasant to such as walk in it; so as *they may now run the Way of his Commandments, walk and not weary, and run and not be faint*.

THESE Particulars rightly considered will discover unto us what a noble Ground for Sanctification is in *Christ* laid down for Believers, which they may use by Faith, *that they may grow in Grace, and grow up in Christ to perfect Holiness*; and what a wonderful

wonderful Contrivance of Grace is this, wherein all Things are made so sure for Believers, *Christ* becoming all Things to them, and paving a royal and sure Way for them; sure for them, and glorious to Himself.

As to the second Particular, How Believers are to make Use of *Christ*, and of these Grounds of Sanctification in *Christ*, which we have mentioned.

First, THERE are some Things which they should beware of, and guard against; as,

1. THEY should beware of giving Way to Discouragements, and hearkening to the Language of Unbelief, or the Suggestions of *Satan*, whereby he will labour to persuade them of the Impossibility of the Work of Sanctification. *Satan* and a deceitful Heart can soon muster up many Difficulties, and alledge that there are many Lions in the Way, to discourage them from venturing forward: And, if *Satan* prevail here, he hath gained a great Point. Therefore the Believer should keep up his Head in Hope, and beware of multiplying Discouragements to himself, or of concluding the Matter impossible; for then shall he neither have Heart nor Hand for the Work, but sit down and wring his Hands, overcome with Despondency of Spirit.

2. THEY should beware of wilfully rejecting their own Mercies, and forbearing to make Use of the Grounds of Hope of Strength and Progress in the Matter of Sanctification, which *Christ* hath allowed them to make Use of. There is such an Evil amongst God's Children, that they scare at that which *Christ* out of great Love hath provided for them, and dare not with Confidence make Use of the great and comfortable Promises, to the End they

they might be encouraged: They will not take their Allowance, as thinking themselves unworthy, and that it would be great Presumption in them to challenge a Right to such great Things; and they think it commendable Humility in them, to stand back; and so wilfully refuse the Advantages that make so much for their Growth in Grace.

3. THEY should beware of a careless Neglect of the Means appointed for advancing in Holiness; for though the Means do not work the Effect, yet it is by the Means GOD hath chosen to work Sanctification. *Here the Hand of the Diligent maketh rich; and the Field of the Slothful is soon grown over with Thorns, so that Poverty cometh as one that travelleth, and Want as an armed Man,* Prov. xxiv. It is a sinful tempting of GOD, to think to be sanctified another Way than GOD hath in his deep Wisdom condescended to.

4. YET they should beware of laying too much Weight on the Means and Ordinances, as if they could effect the Business. Though the LORD hath thought good to work in and by the Means, yet He Himself must do the Work. Means are but Means, and not the principal Cause; nor can they work, but as the principal Agent is pleased to work by them: When we lean to the Means, and to Instruments, we pre-judge ourselves, by disobliging GOD, and provoking Him to leave us, that we may wrestle with the Ordinances alone, and find no Advantage.

5. ALBEIT the Means can do nothing unless He breathe, yet we should beware not only of neglecting them, but also of a slighting Way of performing them, without that Earnestness and Diligence that is required. *Cursed is he who doth the Work of*
the

the LORD negligently, Jer. xlviii. 10. Here then is the special Art of Christianity, to be diligent, earnest and serious in the Means, as if they could effect the Matter we were seeking; and yet to be as much abstracted from them in our Hopes and Expectation, and as much leaning on the LORD alone, and depending on Him for the Blessing, as if we were using no Means at all.

6. THEY should beware of slighting and neglecting the Motions of the Spirit; for thereby they may lose the best Opportunity. They should be always on the Wing, ready to embrace the least Motion; and stand always ready, waiting for the Breathings of his Spirit, and open at his Call; lest afterward they be put to call and seek, and not attain what they would be at.

7. THEY should also guard against quenching the Spirit, or grieving the Spirit, by their unsuitable Carriage; for this will mar their Sanctification. It is by the Spirit that the Work of Sanctification is carried on in the Soul: And when this Spirit is disturbed, and put from his Work, how can the Work go on?

Secondly, IT were of great Advantage for such as would grow in Grace, and advance in the Way of Holiness, to be living in the constant Conviction,

1. OF the Necessity of Holiness, *without which no Man shall see God.*

2. OF their own Inability to do any one Act aright; how they are not sufficient of themselves to think any Thing as of themselves, and that without Christ they can do nothing.

3. OF

3. OF the Insufficiency of any human Help, or Means, or Way, to mortify aright one Corruption, or to give Strength for the right Discharge of any one Duty : For *our Sufficiency is of God*, and it is *through the Spirit that we must mortify the Deeds of the Body.*

4. AND of the Treachery and Deceitfulness of the Heart, which is bent to follow Bye-ways, being not only *deceitful above all Things, but also desperately wicked.*

THAT, by this Means, the Soul may be jealous of itself, and despair of doing any Thing in its own Strength; and so be fortified against that main Evil, which is an Enemy to all true Sanctification, viz. Confidence in the Flesh.

Thirdly, THE Soul should keep its Eye fixed on these Things :

1. ON *Christ's* All-sufficiency, to help in all Cases; that *He is able to save to the uttermost.*

2. ON his Compassionateness to such as are out of the Way, and Readiness to help poor Sinners; and this will keep the Soul from Fainting and Despairing.

3. ON the Commands to Holiness; such as these, *Cleanse your Hands, and purify your Hearts: Be ye holy, for I am holy:* That the Authority of GOD, and Conscience to a Command, may set the Soul to work.

4. ON the great Recompence of Reward that is appointed for such as wrestle on, and endure to the End; and on all the Promises of great Things to
such.

such as are sanctified, whereof the Scriptures are full: That the Soul may be encouraged to run through Difficulties, to ride out Storms, to endure Hardness as a good Soldier, and to persevere in Duty.

5. ON the other Hand, on the many sad Threatnings and Denunciations of Wrath against such as transgress his Laws, and on all the sad Things that such as shake off the Fear of GOD and the Study of Holiness have to look for, of which the Scripture is full; that, by this Means, the Soul may be kept in Awe, and spurred forward unto Duty.

6. ON the Rule, the Word of GOD, by which alone we must regulate all our Actions: and this ought to be our Meditation Day and Night

Fourthly, IN all this Study of Holiness, the Believer should level at a right End; and not design Holiness for this End, that he might be justified thereby, or that he might thereby procure and purchase to himself Heaven and GOD's Favour; (for the Weight of all that must lie on *Jesus Christ*, who is our Righteousness; and our Holiness must not dethrone Him, nor rob Him of his Glory, which He will not give to another) but to the End he might glorify GOD, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and please Him who calleth to Holiness; and thereby be made *meet to be Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, and be made a meet Bride for such a holy Bridegroom, and a Member to such an holy Head; that thereby others might be edified, the Soul may look like a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and like a Servant of *Christ*: bought with a Price, and have a clear Evidence of his Regeneration and Justification, and also that he

he may expresse his Thankfulness to God for all his Favours and Benefits.

Fifthly, THE Soul should by Faith lay hold on the Ground of sanctification; that is to say, 1. What *Christ* hath purchased for his People. 2. What as a publick Person He hath done for them. And so by Faith,

1. CHALLENGE a Right to, and lay hold on, the Promises of Grace, Strength, Victory, in combating with Corruption within, and *Satan* and a wicked World without.

2. RECKON themselves dead unto Sin, through the Death of *Christ*, and alive unto God through his Resurrection.

THAT by this Means they may be encouraged to continue fighting against a vanquished Enemy, and not give over, notwithstanding Disappointments, Discouragements, Prevailings of Corruption, that the Believer may know upon what Ground he standeth, and what is the Ground of his Hope of Victory, and so he *may run, not as uncertainly; and so fight, not as one that beateth the Air*, 1 Cor. ix. 26.

Sixthly, IN this Work of Sanctification, the Believer should be much in the lively Exercise of Faith; fight by Faith; advance by Faith; grow up and bring forth Fruit by Faith: And so,

1. THE Believer should be oft renewing his Hold of *Christ*, holding Him fast by Faith, and so abiding in Him, that he may bring forth Fruit.

2. NOT

2. NOT only should he be keeping his Union fast with *Christ*, but he should be also eying *Christ* by Faith, as his Store-house, and general LORD Dispensator of all the purchased Blessings of the Covenant which he standeth in Need of; and looking on *Christ* as standing engaged by Office to compleat his Work of Salvation, and to present him with the rest to Himself Holy, without Blemish, yea, and without Spot or Wrinkle or any such Thing.

3. HE should by Faith grasp the Promises, both of the general Stock of Grace, the new Heart of Flesh, and the spirit to cause us to walk in his Statutes, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.* and of the several Acts of Grace that he standeth in Need of, such as that, *Jer. xxxiii. 8. I will cleanse them from all their Iniquities.*

4. As the Believer should by Faith draw out of *Christ*, thro' the Conduit of the Promises, which are all *Yea and Amen in Him*, Grace, Strength, Knowledge, Courage or whatever his Fight in this Warfare calleth for, to the End he may be *strong in the LORD and in the Power of his Might*, so he should by Faith roll the Weight of the whole Work upon *Christ*; and thus cast himself and his Care and Burden on Him, who careth for him, and so go on in Duty without Anxiety, knowing who beareth the Weight of all, and who hath undertaken to work both to will and to do according to his good Pleasure. Thus would the Work be easy and safe, when by Faith we roll the Burden on Him who is the chosen One fitted for that Work, and leave it on Him who is our Strength, patiently waiting in Hope.

THUS the Believer makes use of *Christ*, as made of GOD *Sanctification*, when in the Use of Means appointed, eying the Covenant of Grace, and the Promises thereof, and what *Christ* hath done to sanctify and cleanse his People, he rolleth the Matter on Him, and expecteth Help, Salvation and Victory thro' Him.

BUT lest some should be discouraged, because they preceive no Growth in Grace for all this, I would say a few Things to them.

1. LET them search and try whether their Disappointment doth not proceed from this, that the Matter is not so cleanly cast over on *Christ* as it should be. Is it not oft found, that they go forth to the Battle in their own Strength, leaning to their own Stock of Grace, to their own Knowledge, or to their Duties? How then can they prosper?

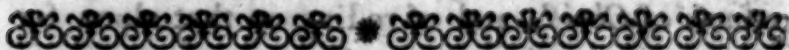
2. LET them mourn as they get a Discovery of this; and guard hereafter against that corrupt Biass of the Heart which is still inclining them to an Engagement without the Captain of their Salvation, and a Fighting without the Armour of GOD.

3. LET them try and see, if in studying Holiness they be not led by corrupt Ends; and do not more labour after Sanctification, that they may be accepted of GOD, as if this were any Cause, or Condition of their Justification than that they may shew their Obedience to the Command of GOD, and express their Thankfulness to Him, and glorify GOD. And, if so they ought to acknowledge GOD's Goodness in that Disappointment, seeing thereby they see more and more

a Necessity of laying aside their own Righteousness, and of betaking themselves to the Righteousness of *Christ*, and of resting on that alone for Acceptance with God.

4. **THEY** should try and see, if their Negligence and Carelessness in Watching, and in the Discharge of Duties, do not occasion their Disappointments. God sometimes thinks fit to suffer a Lion of Corruption to set on them, that they may look about them, and stand more vigilantly upon their Watch-Tower, knowing that they have to do with a vigilant Adversary, the Devil, who as a roaring Lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; and that they fight not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickednesses in high Places. It is not for nought that we are so often commanded to watch, *Mat.* xxiv. 42. and xxv. 13. and xxvi. 41. and xiv. 25. *Luke* xxi. 36. *Mark* xiii. 33, 34, 35, 37. *1 Cor.* xvi. 13. *1 Thess.* v. 6. *1 Pet.* iv. 7. *Col.* iv. 2. Thro' the Want of this, we know what befel *David* and *Peter*.

5. **THEY** should try and see, whether there be not too much Self Confidence, which occasioned *Peter's* foul Fall. God may, in Justice and Mercy, suffer Corruption to break loose upon such and tread them under Foot, to learn them afterward to carry more soberly, and to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling, *Phil.* ii. 12. Remembring what a jealous holy God He is with whom they have to do, what an Adversary they have against them, and how weak their own Strength is.



C H A P. VI.

How Christ is to be made Use of, in Reference to the Killing and Crucifying of the old Man.

HAVING thus shortly pointed out some Things in general, serving to the clearing the Way of our using *Christ* for Sanctification; we come now more particularly to the clearing up of this Business. In Sanctification we must consider, 1. The renewing and changing our Nature; and, 2. The washing and purging away our daily contracted Spots. The first of these is commonly divided into two Parts, *viz.* 1. The Mortification, Killing and Crucifying of the old Man of Sin, which is within; and, 2. The Vivification, Renewing, Quickning and Strengthening of the New Man of Grace; and this is a Growth in Grace, and in Fruitfulness and Holiness.

As to the first of these, *viz.* the Mortification or Crucifying the old Man; we know, that there is such a Principle of Wickedness and Enmity against God, in Man by Nature, since the Fall, whereby the Man is inclined to Evil, and only to Evil. This is called the old Man, as being, like the Body, made up of so many Parts, Joints and Members, that is, so many Corruptions and evil Inclinations together make up a Body; and they are fast joined and compacted together, as the Members of the Body, each useful and serviceable

to another, and all of them concurring and contributing their utmost to the carrying on the Work of Sin; and so it is the Man of Sin: And it is also called the old Man, as having first Possession of the Soul before it is by Grace renewed. This old Man hath his Members in our Members and Faculties, so that none of them are free; Understanding, Will, Affections, and the Members of our Body, are all Servants of Unrighteousness to this old Man. So we read of the *Motions of Sin*, *Rom. vii. 5.* which work in our Members to bring forth Fruit unto Death. And the old Man is said to be corrupt, according to the deceitful Lusts, *Eph. iv. 22.* All which Lusts and Affections are as so many Members of this Body of Sin, and of this old Man. And farther, there is herein a Power, Force and Efficacy, which this old Man hath in us, to carry us away, and, as it were, constrain us, as by a forcible Law. Hence we read of the *Law of Sin and Death*, which only the Law of the Spirit of Life in *Christ* doth make us free from. It is also called a *Law in our Members warring against the Law of our Mind*. So it is said to lust against the Spirit. All which point out the Strength, Activity and Dominion of the Soul; so that it is as the Husband over the Wife, *Rom. vii. 1.* Yea, it hath a domineering and constraining Power, where its Horns are not held in by Grace. And as its Power is great, so its Nature is wicked and malicious; for it is pure *Enmity against God*, so that it neither is nor can be reconciled, and therefore must be put off and abolished, killed and crucified. Now, herein lieth the Work of a Believer, to be killing, mortifying and crucifying this Enemy, or rather Enmity; and delivering himself from under this Bondage and Slavery, that he may be *Christ's* Free-man, thro' the Spirit.

Now, if it be asked, How shall a Believer make Use of *Christ*, to the End this old Man may be crucified? How should a Believer mortify this old Man, and the Lusts thereof, thro' *Christ*, or by the Spirit of *Jesus*? We answer,

I. THE Believer should have his Eye on this old Man, as his arch Enemy, as a deadly Cut-throat lying within his Bosom. It is an Enemy lodging within him, in his Soul, Mind, Heart and Affections, so that there is no Part free; and therefore is acquainted with all the Motions of the Soul, and is always opposing and hindering every Thing that is good: It is an Enemy that will never be reconciled to God, and therefore will not be reconciled with the Believer as such; for it is called Enmity itself: And so it is always seeking to promote the Ruin of the Soul, what by prompting, moving, and forcibly drawing or driving to Evil; what by withstanding, resisting, opposing, counter-working and contradicting what is good. Therefore, this being so dangerous, so constant and implacable an Enemy, so active and close, so deadly and destructive; it is the Believer's Part to guard against, to have a vigilant Eye upon it, to carry as an irreconcilable Enemy thereunto; and never to come into Terms of Agreement therewith, never once to parley. And the Believer should not have his Eye upon this or that Member of this Body of Death, so much as upon the Body itself, or the Principle of Wickedness and Rebellion against God; the Head, Life, Spirit or Law of this Body of Death: For there lieth its greatest Wickedness and Activity; and this is always opposing us, though not in every Joint and Member, but sometimes in one, sometimes in another.

2. THOUGH the Believer should have a main Eye upon the Body, this innate strong Law of Sin and Death; yet should he have Friendship with no Part, Member or Lust of all this Body: All the Deeds of the Body should be mortified; the least of them countenanced, entertained and embraced, will work our Ruin, and cut our Soul's Throat: Therefore should the Believer look on each of them, and on all of them, as his deadly Enemies.

3. He should consider, that as it is a very unseemly Thing for Him to be a Slave to that old Tyrant, so it is dangerous and deadly: His Life lieth at Stake; either he must get it killed, or it will kill him; his Life will go for its Life; if this Enemy escape, he is a gone Man. The Consideration of this should cause the Believer to act here in Earnestness and Seriousness, with Care and Diligence, and set about this Work of Mortification with Labour and Pains.

4. MUCH more must it be against all Reason to be making *Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof*, to be strengthening the Hands of, and laying Provision to, this Enemy, which is set and sworn against us. And here is much of spiritual Wisdom required; to discern what may make for fostering of this or that Corruption or Member of the Body of Sin, and to withdraw that, as we labour to take away Provision of any Kind from an Enemy that is coming against us. *Paul* acted herein as a wise Combatant, when he kept under his Body, and brought it into Subjection. It were but to mock God, and to preach forth our own Folly, to be looking to *Christ* for Help against such an Enemy, and in the mean Time to be underhand strengthening the Hands of the Enemy: This would

would be Double-dealing and Treachery against ourselves.

5. THE Believer should remember, that this Enemy is not for him to fight against alone, and that his own Strength and Skill will make but a slender Opposition: It will laugh at the shaking of his Spear. It can easily insinuate itself on all Occasions, because it lieth so close to the Soul, always residing there, and is at the Believer's right Hand whatever he be doing, and is always openly or grossly opposing, and that with great Facility. Man cannot know all the Windings and Turnings, all the Drifts and Designs, all the lurking and retiring Places, all the Falshoods and Double-dealings, all the Diffimulations, Lyes and Subterfuges, all the plausible and deceitful Pretexts and Insinuations of his Heart, acted and spirited by this Law of Sin and Death. And, beside this Sleight and Cunning, it hath Strength and Power to draw by Lusts into Destruction and Perdition, 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. and to carry the Soul headlong. All which shews, that the Believer should call in other Help than his own.

6. So that the Believer must have his Recourse, for Help and Succour here, unto *Jesus* the Captain of Salvation; follow Him, and fight under his Banner; make Use of his Weapons, which are spiritual; fight according to his Counsel and Conduct, taking Him as a Leader and Commander, and lying open for his Orders and Instructions, waiting for the Motions of his Spirit, and following them: And thus oppose and fight against this deadly Enemy, with an Eye always on *Christ* by Faith, depending on Him for Light to the Mind, Resolution to the Will, and Grace to the whole Soul, to stand in the Battle, and to withstand all Assaults: And never engage in a Dispute with this
Enemy,

Enemy, or any Lust or Member of this Body, without *Christ* the Principal; that is, the Soul should despair in itself, and *be strong in Him, and in the Power of his Might.*

7. AND, for this Cause, the Believer should eye the Covenant, the Basis of all our Hope and Consolation, wherein final and full Victory is promised to *Christ*, as our Head, viz. that He shall bruise the Serpent's Head; and so that, in Him, all his Followers, (persevering such) shall lift up the Head, and get full Victory at length over both Sin and Death. Now, it is GOD that giveth us the Victory, through our LORD Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 57. And the GOD of Peace shall bruise Satan under your Feet shortly: Sin shall not have Dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace. The Believer, I say, should look out by Faith unto, and lay Hold on, these and the like Promises; and thereby get Strength, whereby he may strive lawfully, and fight valiantly, and oppose with Courage and Resolution.

8. FURTHER, the Believer should eye *Christ* as a Fountain, a full and compleat Magazine, standing open, and ready for every one of his Soldiers to run to, for new Supply of what they want: So that, whatever they find wanting in their Christian Armour, they must run away to the open Magazine, that standeth ready for them, and by Faith take and put on what they stand in Need of. If their Girdle of Truth be slacked, loosed or weakened, and Satan object to them their Double-dealing, to discourage them, they must away to Him who is the Truth, that He may bind on that Girdle better, and make their Hearts more upright before God in all they do. And if their Breast-plate of Righteousness be weakened, and Satan there leem
to

to get Advantage, by casting up to them their unrighteous Dealings towards GOD or Men, they must flee to Him who only can help here, and beg Pardon through his Blood for their Failings, and set afresh to the Battle. If their Resolution grow weak, it must be renewed in *Christ's* Armory, and the Feet anew be shod therewith. If their Shield of Faith begin to fail them, away must they get to Him, who is *the Author and Finisher of Faith*, Heb. xii. 2. And, if their Helmet of Hope begin to fail, in this Armory alone can that be supplied. And if their Sword be blunted in their Hand, or they unable to wield it aright, the Spirit of *Jesus* can only teach their Hands to fight, and instruct them to manage that useful Weapon with Advantage. *He is their GOD that girdeth them with Strength, and maketh their Way perfect. He maketh their Feet like Hinds Feet, and setteth them upon their high Places. He teacheth their Hands to war, so that a Bow of Steel is broken by their Arms. He giveth them the Shield of Salvation. His Right Hand upholdeth them. He girdeth them with Strength unto the Battle.*

9. FOR the further strengthening of their Hope, Faith and Confidence, Believers should eye *Christ* as hanging on the Cross, and overcoming by Death, Death and him that had the Power of Death, the Devil; and so as meritoriously purchasing this Redemption from the Slavery of Sin and *Satan*, and particularly from the Slavery of that Body of Death, and of the Law of Sin and Death: So that the Believer may now look upon that Enemy, how fearful soever it appear, as condemned and killed in the Death of *Christ*. He, having laid down the Price of Redemption, hath bought this Freedom from the Chains with which he was held in Captivity. Faith then on the Death of *Jesus*, satisfying Justice
for

for the poor Captive, may and should support and strengthen the Hope and Confidence of the Believer, that he shall obtain Victory.

It will not be amiss, for further explaining the Matter, to remove a Scruple or two. Some may say, that they cannot perceive that all their Pains in this Matter come to any good Issue; for they never found Corruption stir more, than since they began to fight against it in Earnest: So that this would seem not to be the right Way.

I answer, 1. MAY not much of this flow from thy not laying the whole Work so wholly off thyself, and upon *Christ*, as thou oughtest to do? Try and see.

2. MAY not the Devil rage most, when he thinks ere long to be ejected? May not he labour to create most Trouble to the Soul, when he seeth that he is like to be put from his Strength?

3. MAY not the Devil be doing this of Purpose to drive thee to despair of ever getting Corruption mortified, or to a fainting in the Pursuit, that so, instead of fighting or standing, thou mayst turn the Back? And should we comply with him in his Designs?

4. MAY not the LORD give Way to this for a Time, to try thy Seriousness, Patience, Submission and Faith, and to sharpen thy Diligence, and kindle thy Zeal? And should we not submit to his wise Dispensations?

5. How canst thou say that thou gaineest no Advantage, as long as thou are helped to stand, and
to

to resist Sin, to cry out against it, and fight as thou canst, and at least not to yield?

6. WHAT if GOD see it for thy Advantage, that thou be kept in Exercise for a Time, to the End thou mayst be kept humble, watchful and diligent? He may see more of thee than thou canst see of thyself, and so may know what is best for thee: And, shouldst thou not condescend to be disposed of by Him, and to let Him make of thee and to do with thee what He will?

7. WHAT if GOD be about to chasten thee thus, for thy former Negligence, Security and Unwatchfulness, and giving too much Advantage to those Lusts which now thou wouldst be delivered from? Shouldst not thou bear the Indignation of the LORD, because thou hast sinned against Him?

8. Is it not thy Duty, the more that Corruption stirs, to run with it the oftner to *Christ*, that He may subdue it, and put it to Silence?

LET this satisfy us, that He is the LORD, who doth what He will in Heaven and in Earth, and may dispose of us as He will, and make of us what He will, for his own Glory: We are to mind our Duty, and be faithful at our Post, resolving never to comply with the Enemy; and to rejoice in this, that the Enemy is already conquered by the Captain, and that we share in his Victory; and that *the very GOD of Peace shall quickly bruise Satan under our Feet.*



C H A P. VII.

How CHRIST is to be made Use of in Reference to growing in Grace.

I COME now to speak a little to the other Part of Sanctification, which concerneth the Change of our Nature, and is called Vivification, or Quickning of the new Man: Called the new *Man*, as having all its several Members and Parts, as well as the old Man; *new*, because posterior to the other. This Duty of growing in Grace, is variously expressed in Scripture: It is called an *abiding and bringing forth Fruit in Christ*, *John xv. 5. adding to Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, &c. 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. a going on to Perfection, Heb. vi. 1. a growing up in Christ in all Things, Eph. iv. 15. a working out our Salvation, Phil. ii. 12. a perfecting Holiness, 2-Cor. vii. 1. a being renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and a putting on the new Man, which after GOD is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, Eph. iv. 23, 24. Col. iii. 10.* Some whereof do more immediately express the Nature of this Change as to the Root, and some as to the Fruits and Effects thereof, and some the Progress and Advancement that is made or to be made therein; and all of them point out a special Work, which lieth on all that would see the Face of GOD.

THIS then being a special Part of the daily Work of a Christian; and it being certain, that without *Christ* we cannot get this Work either
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begun or carried on, the Question is, How we are to make Use of *Christ* for this End?

THOUGH by what we have said, it may be easy to gather what is to be said here; yet I shall briefly put the Reader in Mind of these Things:

1. THE Believer should consider what an Ornament this is to the Soul, to have on this new Man, which is created after the Image of GOD; what an Excellency lieth here, to recover that lost Glory; and what Advantage the Soul reapeth hereby, when it is *made meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, walking worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge of GOD*: What Glory and Peace is here, to be found obedient unto the many Commands given to be holy; what Hazard is in the Want of Holiness; how unanswerable it is unto our Profession, who are Members of such a holy Head; what Joy and Satisfaction there is in being Temples of the Holy Ghost, in walking after the Spirit, in bringing forth Fruit unto the Glory of the Father. The Consideration of these, and other Motives unto this, should arm the Soul with Resolution, and harden it against Opposition.

2. IT should be remembered, that this Work, though it be our Duty, yet it is beyond our Power. It is true, at Conversion, the Seed of Grace is cast into the Soul, new Habits are infused, a new Principle of Life is given, the stony Heart is changed into a Heart of Flesh; yet these Principles cannot act in themselves, or be brought into Act by any Thing that a Believer, considered in himself, can do: But this Growth in Grace, must be carried on by Divine Help, by the Spirit of *Jesus* dwelling
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and working within. Albeit no Believer will question this, yet it may be it shall be found after Trial, that one main Cause of their not growing in Grace, and making Progress in this Work, is their not acting as believing this, but setting about the Work as if it were a Work which they themselves could do without special Help: Therefore the Believer should abide, live and act, in the Faith of this Truth.

3. THEREFORE Believers should not, in going about this Work, either trust to their own Strength, to the Habits of Grace, to their former Experiences, to their Knowledge, or the like; nor yet should they trust to any external Mean, because the Wisdom, Strength and Help, which their Case calleth for, is not to be found in them. Yet they should not think of laying these Means aside: For then would they sin against God; they would rob themselves of the Help, Strength and Supply, which God useth to convey to the Soul in and by the Means: And withal, they should not tempt the LORD, by prescribing another Way to Him than He hath thought good to take.

4. ALBEIT it be true, that the Power and Grace of God, alone, doth begin and carry on this Work of Sanctification; yet though He might carry on and finish this Work without the Intervention of second Causes or Means, He hath notwithstanding thought fit, for his own Glory, to work this Work by Means, and particularly by Believers setting about the Work: He worketh not in Man as if he were a Block or a Stone, but useth him as a rational Creature, having useful and necessary Faculties, and having a Body fitted to be subservient to the Soul in its Actions. Therefore the Believer must not think to lie by, and do nothing; for he is com-

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manded

manded to work out his own Salvation; and that because it is GOD that worketh in him both to will and do: Because GOD worketh all, therefore he should work; so reasoneth the Apostle: So that GOD's Working is an Argument and Motive to the Man to work, and not an Argument to him to lie idle, and do nothing. And here is the Divine Skill requisite in this Business, for the Believer to be as diligent and active as if he could bring forth Fruit by his own Working; and yet to be as abstracted from himself, his own Grace, Ability, Knowledge and Experience, in his Working, as if he were lying by like a mere Block.

5. THE Soul that would grow in Grace, should remember, that *Christ* is proposed to us as a Copy which we are to imitate; and that therefore we should set *Christ* continually before us as our Pattern, that we may follow his Steps. But withal it should be remembered, that He is not like other Copies, that can help the Man that imitateth them no other Way than by their Prospect: For looking by Faith on this Copy, will bring Virtue to the Man that studieth to imitate, whereby he shall be enabled to follow his Copy the better. O if we knew in Experience what this were, to take a Look of *Christ's* Love, Patience, Long-suffering, Meekness, Hatred of Sin, Zeal, and by Faith to pore in, 'till, by Virtue proceeding from that Copy, we found our Hearts cast into the same Mould!

6. BELIEVERS should lie open to the Influences of *Christ*, and guard against the putting Obstructions in the Way, through grieving of the Spirit, by which He conveyeth those Influences to the Soul; and through questioning and misbelieving *Christ's* Faithfulness, which as a violent Humour stoppeth : Passage. So then Believers should look and wait,

wait, drawing, seeking from Him what they need, and guarding against every Thing that may provoke the LORD to Anger, whether in Omission or Commission. Here is requisite an holy, humble, sober, and watchful Walk, an earnest, serious and hungry looking out to Him, and patient waiting for Supply from Him. This is to open the Mouth wide, that He may fill it; to lie before the Sun of Righteousness, that the Beams thereof may beat upon them, and warm and revive them; and to wait as a Beggar at this King's Gate, 'till He give the Alms.

7. FOR the strengthening of their Hope and Faith in this, they should lay Hold on *Christ* dying, and by his Death purchasing all those Influences of Life and Strength which are requisite for carrying on the Work of Grace and Sanctification: He should look on these Influences as purchased at a dear Rate by the Blood of *Jesus Christ*; so that the *Divine Power giveth unto us all Things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue, 2 Pet. i. 3.* And this will encourage the Soul to wait on, and expect the flowing down of Influences, and spiritual Blessings, and Showers of Grace, to cause the Soul to flourish and become fruitful; and to urge and press more earnestly, by Faith, the bestowing of the purchased Benefits.

8. THE Believers likewise should exert their Faith upon the Promises of Grace, Strength, and Life, whereby they shall walk in his Ways, have God's Laws put into their Minds, and writ in their Hearts; and of *the new Heart, and new Spirit, and the Heart of Flesh, and the Spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his Ways or Statutes, and keep his Judgments and do them.* Because these are all given over to the Believer by Way of Legacy,

CHRIST becoming the Mediator of the new Testament, that by Means of Death, for the Redemption of the Transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the Promise of eternal Inheritance, Heb. ix. 15. Now Christ by his Death hath confirmed this Testament: For, where a Testament is, there must also of Necessity be the Death of the Testator; for a Testament is of Force after Men are dead, Verses 16, 17. Christ then dying, to make the Testament of Force, hath made the Legacy of the Promises sure to the Believer. He was made a Minister of Circumcision, to confirm the Promises made to the Fathers. That the eyeing of these Promises by Faith is a noble Mean to Sanctification, is clear by what the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having therefore these Promises, let us cleanse ourselves — perfecting Holiness in the Fear of GOD. So that the Believer, that would grow in Grace, should eye Christ the fundamental Promise, the Testator establishing the Testament, and the Executor of the Covenant, and expect the good Things through Him and from Him, through the Conduit and Channel of the Promises.

9. FAITH should also look to Christ, as an Intercessor with the Father, for this Particular, John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth. And this will add to their Confidence, that the Work shall go on; for Christ was always heard of the Father, and so will be in this Prayer, which was put up for all Believers.

THE Believer then should eye Christ as dying to purchase the good Things promised, and to confirm the same; as quickened, and rising as Head and publick Person, to insure this Work, and to bestow the Graces requisite; and as praying also for the Father's Concurrence: And cast the Burden of the Work

Work on him by Faith, knowing that He standeth obliged, by his Place and Relation to his People, to bear all their Burdens, to work all their Works in them, to perfect his own Work that he Hath begun in them, to present them to Himself at last a holy Bride, to give them the Spirit to dwell in them, to quicken their mortal Bodies, and to lead them, Rom. xi. 14. 'till at length they be crowned, and brought to Glory. This is to live by Faith; when *Christ* liveth, acteth and worketh in us by his Spirit. Thus *Christ dwelleth in the Heart by Faith*; and by this his People become rooted and grounded in Love; and *knowing the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge*, they become filled with all the Fulness of GOD.

9. BUT mean Time remember, we should not think that there is no Growth in Grace, because it cometh not our Way, or by the Instruments and Means that we most expect it by. Possibly we are too fond of some Instruments and Means, that we prefer to others; and we think, if ever we get Good, it must be that Way, and by that Means, be it private or publick: And GOD may check us for our Folly, by taking another Way.

10. NOR should we think that there is no Growth in the Work of Grace, because it cometh not at such and such a set Time; nor should we think the Matter desperate, because of our looking long, and waiting, and asking, and labouring, and yet seeing no sensible Advantage. Such and such a Believer (saith the Soul) made great Progress in a short Time; but I come no Speed, for as long as I have been at this School. O! we should beware of limiting the Holy One of *Israel*. Let us be at Duty, and commit the Event to Him.

11. IT

11. IT is not a fit Time to take to measure off our Graces, when Devils are broken loose upon us, Temptations are multiplied, Corruptions make a great Noise, and we meet with an horrible Tempest shaking us on all Hands: For it will be strong Grace, that will much appear then; it will be a strong Faith, that will say, *Though He kill me yet will I trust in Him.* At such a Time it will be much if the Man keep the Ground he hath gained. The Trees, which in a cold Winter-Day bear neither Leaves nor Fruit, must not be said to go back, or not to grow; when the Spring cometh again they may revive and be as fruitful as ever.

12. WHATEVER Measure of Holiness the Believer attain, he should take special Heed that he Place no Part of his Confidence of being justified in it; as if that could come in as any Part of the Price to satisfy Justice: But when he hath done all, let him account himself an unprofitable Servant. Tho' Believers will not be so gross as to speak thus, yet sure their holding back from God, because they find not such a Measure of Holiness as they would, looketh too much this Way, and saith, that they lean too much hereunto in the Matter of Acceptance before God. Now, this should be specially guarded against, lest their Labour be in vain.



C H A P. VIII.

How to make Use of Christ, for taking away the Guilt of Sins that come after Justification.

THE next Part of our Sanctification is in Reference to our Failings thro' Violence of Temptations, or thro' daily Infirmities. The Question is, How *Christ* is to be made Use of for taking of these away?

IN these there are two Things to be noticed: *First*, The Guilt, whereby the Transgressor is liable to the Sentence of the Law, or to the Penalty annexed to the Breach thereof, which is no less than God's Curse: Next, The Stain or Blot, whereby the Soul is defiled, and made so far incapable of Glory (for *nothing entereth in there which defileth*) and of Communion and Fellowship with God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity. So that it is manifest, both these must be taken away, that they may not stand in our Way to the Father. And as to both we must make Use of *Christ*, who is the only Way to the Father.

WE shall first speak of the taking away the Guilt that is contracted by every Sin. And for this Cause, we shall, 1. Shew what *Christ* hath done as Mediator, that the Guilt contracted by our daily Failings might be taking away. 2.

What

What the Believer should do for his getting of Guilt taken away in *Christ*; or how he should make Use of *Christ* for Reconciliation with God after Transgressions, for the taking away of the Guilt that he lieth under because of his Violation of the Law.

As to the first, *Christ*, for taking away of Guilt contracted daily, hath done these Things;

1. CHRIST laid down his Life a Ransom for all our Sins; both such as were past before we believed, and such as were committed after. His Blood was shed for the Remission of Sins indefinitely, and without Distinction.

2. HAVING satisfied Justice, and being risen from the Dead as a Conqueror, He is now exalted to be a Prince, to give Repentance and Remission of Sins, Acts v. 31. Now, Repentance and Remission of Sins his People have Need of, after Conversion, as well as before.

3. THERE are Promises of Pardon and Remission of Sins in the new Covenant of Grace, all which are sealed and confirmed in the Blood of JESUS; Jer. xxxi. 34. — *For I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.* And, Chap. xxxiii. 8. *And I will cleanse them from all their Iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me: And I will pardon all their Iniquities, whereby they have sinned against Me, and whereby they have transgressed against Me.*

4. THO' there be no actual Pardon of Sins 'till they be committed, and repented of, according to the Tenor of the Gospel, Mat. iii. 2. Luke xiii. 3. Acts ii. 38. and viii. 22. yet while
Christ

Christ bare all the Sins of his People upon the Cross, they were all then meritoriously taken away.

5. So that, by Virtue of *Christ's* Death, there is a Way laid down, in the Covenant of Grace, how our Sins shall be actually pardoned, viz. That, at our first laying Hold on *Christ* by Faith, all the Sins whereof we then stand guilty shall be actually pardoned and forgiven, and all our After-sins shall also be actually pardoned, upon our laying Hold on *Christ* a-new by Faith, and turning to GOD by Repentance. And this Way is revealed in the Gospel, for the Instruction and Encouragement of Believers; and all to the Glory of his free Grace.

6. BESIDE *Christ's* Death and Resurrection, which give Hope of Pardon, there is likewise his Intercession useful for this End: For saith the Apostle, 1 John ii. 1, 2.—*If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the Propitiation for our Sins.* This Intercession of His is a special Part of his Priesthood, who was the great High Priest, and a compleating Part; and upon this Account it is, that *He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to GOD through Him, because He liveth for ever to make Intercession for them,* Heb. vii. 25. For by his Intercession, is the Work of Redemption carried on, the purchased Benefits applied; and particularly new Grants of Remission are thro' his Intercession issued forth: He pleading in a Way suitable to his glorified Condition, his Death and Propitiation made upon the Cross, accepted of the Father, and declared to be accepted by his Resurrection, Ascension, and sitting at the Father's Right Hand. And thus as Believers are reconciled

conciled to GOD by *Christ's* Death, they are saved by his Life.

7. AND as for the Conditions requisite to renewed Pardon, viz. Faith and Repentance, *Christ* is the Worker of both : For He is a *Prince exalted to give Repentance*, first and last, *Acts* iv. 31. and as He is the Author of Faith, so He is the Finisher of it, *Heb.* xii. 2.

As to the *second* Particular, namely, What Believers should do for getting the Guilt of their After-failings taken away by *Christ*? Or how they should make Use of *Christ* for this End? I shall, propose these Things to Consideration :

I. WE should beware to think, that all our after actual Transgressions are actually pardoned, either when *Christ* died or when we first believed in *Christ*, as some suppose ; for Sin cannot properly be said to be pardoned before it be committed. *David* was put to sue for Pardon after his actual Transgression was committed, and not for the mere Sense and Feeling of the Pardon when he cried out *Psal.* li.—*Blot out my Transgressions ; Hide thy Face from my Sins, and blot out all mine Iniquities.* And Verse 14. *Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness.* Sure, when he spoke thus he sought some other Thing than Intimation of Pardon to his Conscience ; for that he desired also, but in far more clear Expressions, Verse 8. *Make me to hear Joy and Gladness,* and Verse 12. *Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation,* Scripture-phrases to express Remission import this, viz. *Covering of Sin, pardoning of Debts, blotting out of Sins, bidding of GOD's Face from Sins, not remembering of them, casting of them behind his Back, casting of them*

them into the Sea, removing of Sins. These and the like Phrases, tho' many of them be metaphorical, yet all clearly evince that Sin must first have a Being before it can be pardoned. The same is clearly imported by the Gospel-Conditions requisite before Pardon, such as *Acknowledgment of Sin*, 1 John i. 9. *Confessing*, and *forsaking* it, Prov. xxviii. 13. *Sorrowing* for it, and repenting of it, and laying Hold on *Christ* by Faith.

THE Reason why I propose this is not only to guard the Soul against this *Antinomian* Error, but also to guard the Soul from Security, to which this Doctrine hath a natural Tendency: For if a Person once think that all his Sins were pardoned upon his first believing, so that many of them were pardoned before they were committed; he shall never be affected for his After-Transgressions, nor shall he act Faith upon the Promises of Pardon made in the Covenant of Grace for After-Transgressions, or for Transgressions actually committed, Jer. xxxi. 34. and xxxiii. 8. Heb. viii. 12. and so there shall be no Use made of *Christ* for new Pardons, or Remission of new Sins.

2. THE Believer should remember, that among other Things antecedently requisite to Remission of posterior actual Transgressions, Gospel-Repentance is especially required, Luke xiii. 3. Mat. iii. 2. Ezek. xviii. 28, 30, 32. Luke xv. 17, 18. Hos. ii. 6, 7. Ezek. xiv. 6. Whereby a Sinner, thro' the Help of the Spirit, being convinced not only of his Hazard by Reason of Sin, but also of the Filthiness and Hatefulness of Sin; and having a Sight of the Mercy of God in *Christ Jesus* to Sinners, turning from their Sin; doth turn from those Sins unto God, with a full Purpose of Heart,

in his Strength, to follow Him and obey his Laws: And hereby the Soul is brought to loath itself and Sin, and is made willing to desire, seek for, accept of, and prize Remission of Sins. This makes them more wary in Time coming, *For behold* (says the Apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 11.) *this self-same Thing that ye sorrowed after a godly Sort, what Carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what Indignation; yea, what Fear; yea, what vehement Desire; yea, what Zeal; yea, what revenge.* Thus is GOD glorified in his Justice and his Mercy is acknowledged, in not entering with us into Judgment, nor casting us into Hell, as He might have done in Justice.

3. YET it should be remembred, that tho' it hath seemed good in the LORD's Eyes to appoint this Way of obtaining Pardon of Sins daily committed, we must not ascribe too much unto Repentance, in the Matter of Pardon; we must not make it a Cause of our Remission, either efficient or meritorious; we must not think that it hath any Hand in appeasing the Wrath of GOD, or in satisfying of Justice. Pardon must always be an Act of GOD's free Grace, unmerited at our Hands, and procured alone thro' the Merits of *Christ*. We must not put Repentance in *Christ's* Room, nor ascribe any Imperfection unto his Merits, as if they needed any Supply from any Act of ours; we must beware of leaning to our Repentance, even so far as to think to commend ourselves to GOD thereby, that we may obtain Pardon.

4. THE Believer should not only consider the Sin itself, but also all its *Aggravations*. There are peculiar Aggravations of some Sins, taken from the Time, Manner and other Circumstances, which rightly considered will help forward

the Work of Humiliation : And the Sins of Believers have this Aggravation above the Sins of others, that they are committed against more Love, and against more Opposition and Contradiction of the Grace of God ; against more Light and Conviction, and therefore their Humiliation ought to be singular and serious. This considering of Sin, with its due Aggravations, would help us to prize Mercy at an high Rate, and cause the Soul more willingly to wait for and more seriously seek after Remission ; knowing that God is more angry for great Sins than for Sins of Infirmity, and may therefore pursue the same with fiercer Judgments.

5. FAITH should eye *Christ* as hanging upon the Cross, and offering up Himself, through the eternal Spirit, a Sacrifice to satisfy Divine Justice for all our Sins. We cannot think that *Christ* bare but some of our Sins, or only Sins committed before Conversion ; and if he bare all, as the Father laid all upon Him, the Believer is to lay hold on Him by Faith, as hanging on the Cross, as well for taking away the Guilt of Sins committed after Conversion, as before. His Sacrifice was a Sacrifice for all ; and *He bare our Sins*, without Distinction or Exception, *in his own Body on the Tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. David had his Eye on this, when he cried out, *Psal. li. 7. Purge me with Hyssop* ; Hyssop being sometimes used in the legal Purifications, which typified that Purification which *Christ* really wrought when He gave Himself a Sacrifice for Sin, *Lev. xiv. 6. Num. xix. 18.*

6. THE Believer looking on *Christ* dying as a Mediator, to pacify the Wrath of God, and to make Satisfaction to the Justice of God for the Sins of his People, should renew his Consent unto
H 2 that

that gracious and wise Contrivance of Heaven, of pardoning Sins through a crucified Mediator, that Mercy and Justice might kiss each other, and be glorified together; and declare again his full Satisfaction with *Christ's* satisfying of Justice for him, and taking away the Guilt of his Sins by that Blood that was shed upon the Cross, by taking those Sins whereof now he standeth guilty, and for which he is desirous of Pardon, and by Faith nailing them to the Cross of *Christ*, and rolling them on his Shoulders, that the Guilt of them, as well as of the rest, might be taken away, thro' the Merits of his Death and Satisfaction.

THUS should a Believer make Use of *Christ* for the taking away the Guilt of his daily Transgressions; and, for further clearing of it, I shall add a few Cautions.

1. THE Course before-mentioned is to be taken with all Sins, tho', 1. They be never so heinous and gross. 2. Tho' they be accompanied with never such crying Aggravations. 3. Tho' they be Sins frequently fallen into. And, 4. Tho' they be Sins many and heaped together. *David's* Transgression was a heinous Sin, and had heinous Aggravations, yea, there was a Complication of Sins together in that one; yet he followed this Course. We find none of those Kind of Sins excepted in the Covenant; and, where the Law doth not distinguish, we ought not to distinguish: Where *GOD's* Law doth not expressly exclude us, we should not exclude ourselves. *Christ's* Death is able enough to take away all Sin. If thro' it a Believer be justified from all his Transgressions committed before Conversion, why may not also a Believer be, thro' Virtue of it, justified

justified from his multiplied Sins committed after Conversion? The Blood of *Christ* cleanseth from all Sin. *Christ* hath taught his Followers to pray, *Forgive us our Sins, as we forgive them that sin against us*; and He hath told us also, that we must forgive our Brother seventy times seven, *Matt. xviii. 22.* We should not be discouraged then from taking this Course, because our Sins are such and such; nay rather, we should look on this as an Argument to press us more unto this Way, because, the greater our Sins be, the greater Need have we of Pardon.

2. BELIEVERS should not abuse this great Condescendency of free Grace, and take the greater Liberty to Sin, because there is such a Way of getting those Sins blotted out and forgiven. *Shall we sin, because we are not under Grace, but under the Law?* That be far from us, saith the Apostle, *Rom. vi. 15.* This were indeed to turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness.

3. THE Believer must not think it strange, if he find more Trouble after great Sins, and a greater Difficulty to lay Hold on *Christ* for Pardon of those, than for Pardon of others: For as God hath been more dishonoured by these, so is his Anger more kindled upon that Account; and it is suitable for the Glory of God's Justice, that our Sorrow for such Sins be proportionably greater; and this will likewise increase the Difficulty: And ordinarily the Effects of God's fatherly Displeasure make deeper Wounds in the Soul after such Sins, and these are not so easily healed. All which call for proportionably greater Sorrow and Repentance, and Acts of Faith; because Faith will meet with more Opposition and Discouragement there, and therefore must be the more

strong, to go through these Impediments, and to lay Hold on his Cross. Yet, tho' this should make all watchful, and to guard against gross Sins, it should not drive any to Despair, nor to say, with that despairing Wretch, their Sin is greater than that it can be forgiven: The Ocean of Mercy can drown and swallow up greater as well as lesser Sins; *Christ* is an all-sufficient Mediator, for the greatest Sins, as well as for the least. *O for thy Name's Sake pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great,* will come in Season to a Soul ready to sink with the Weight of this Millstone tied about its Neck.

4. As the greater Sins should not make us despair of taking this Course for Remission, so neither should the Smalness of Sin make us neglect this Way; for the least Sin cannot be pardoned but thro' *Jesus Christ*: For the Law of God is violated thereby, Justice provoked, and therefore Sin cannot be now pardoned, by Reason of the Threatnings annexed to the Transgression of the Law, without a Ransom. Death is the Wages of all Sins, less and greater; and the Curse is due to all Sinners, greater and smaller: Therefore the Believer should not suffer one Sin, seen and discovered, to lie unpardoned: but, on the first Discovery thereof, take it away to *Christ*, and nail it to his Cross.

5. THE Believer should not conclude that his Sins are not pardoned, because possibly temporal Strokes, inflicted because of them, are not removed: For tho' *David's* Sin was pardoned, yet, because of that Sin a temporal Stroke attended him and his Family to his Dying-day; for not only God cut off the Child, 2. Sam. xii. 14. but told him, that the Sword should never depart from his House, and that *He would raise up Evil against him out of*

his

his own House, and give his *Wives* to one that should
 be with them in the Sight of the Sun, Verses 10. 11.
 So we read, that the LORD took Vengeance on
 their Inventions, whose Sin He had pardoned,
Psal. xcix. 8. God may see this expedient, for
 his own Glory, and for humbling them, and cau-
 sing them to fear to sin against Him.

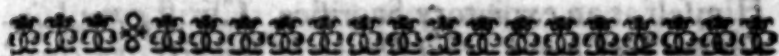
1. BUT what Course shall we take with secret
 Sins? I answer, This same Course must be fol-
 lowed with them. There is an implicit Repen-
 tance of Sins that have not been distinctly seen and
 observed; as, who can see and observe all their
 Failings? And so there may be an implicit Faith;
 that is, the Believer being persuaded that he is
 guilty of more Sins than he hath yet a clear Sight
 of, as he should bewail his Condition before
 God because of these, and sorrow for them after
 a godly Manner; so he should take them together
 in a Heap, or as a closed Bag full, and by Faith
 nail them to the Cross of *Christ*, as if they were
 all distinctly seen and known. *Psal. xix. 12.* yet
 says he moreover, *Cleanse thou me from secret*
Faults.

2. BUT, what shall I do with the Guilt of my
 weak Repentance, and weak Faith? *Ans.* When
 with a weak and defective Repentance, and Faith
 thou art carrying thy Sins away to *Christ*, and
 nailing them to his Cross, let the Imperfections
 of thy Faith and Repentance go with the rest, and
 leave all there.

3. WHAT shall I do with my Conscience, that
 still accuseth me of Guilt, notwithstanding my
 taking and following this Course? *Ans.* Despise
 not the Accusations of Conscience; but let these
 humble thee the more: Yet know, that Consci-
 ence

ence is but an Under-servant and God's Deputy, and must accuse according to Law, its Mouth must be stopt by Law; and so the Soul should stay and answer the Accusations of Conscience with this, that he hath fled to *Christ* the only Mediator, and cast his Burden on Him, and leaneth on his Merits alone, and hath put those Sins in his Hand as his Advocate and Intercessor with the Father; and that the Gospel requireth no more of him.

AND if Conscience should say, that both Faith and Repentance are imperfect and defective; and that Guilt is thereby rather increased than taken away: He must answer again, True; but I have done with the Guilt of my Faith and Repentance, as with the rest, taken all to *Christ*, and left all on Him; and herein only do I acquiesce: I look not for Pardon for my imperfect Faith and Repentance, yea, nor would I look for Pardon of my Sins for my Faith and Repentance, were they never so perfect, but only in and thro' *Jesus Christ*, the only Redeemer and Advocate. But further, this Deputy should be brought to his Master, who can only command him to Silence: That is to say, the Believer should go to *Christ* with the accusing Conscience, and desire Him to command it Silence, that he may have Peace of Conscience, and Freedom from those Accusations.



C H A P. IX.

*How to make Use of Christ for Cleansing of us
from our daily Spots.*

HAVING spoken of the Way of making Use of *Christ* for removing the Guilt of our After Transgressions, we come to speak of the Way of making Use of *Christ* for taking away the Filth that cleaveth to the Soul, thro' them: For every Sin defileth the Man, *Matt. xv. 20.* Hence we are so oft called to this Duty of washing and making us clean, *Isa. i. 16. Jer. iv. 14. Acts xxii. 16.* Now, in speaking to this, we shall observe the same Method; and first shew, what *Christ* hath done to take away this Filth; and next what Way we are to make Use of Him for this End, to get our Filthiness taken away, that we may be holy.

As to the *first*, For the purging away the Filth of our After Transgressions, *Christ* hath done these Things;

1. HE hath died, that He might procure this Advantage to us; and thus He hath washed us in his Blood, which He shed upon the Cross. Thus He loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, *Rev. i. 5.* And this is from all Sins, as well such as are committed after, as such as are committed before Conversion. Thus He by Himself purged

purged our Sins, Heb. i. 3. viz. by offering up of Himself as an expiatory Sacrifice. Christ gave Himself for his Church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it—that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but that it should be holy and without Blemish. He gave Himself for us, that He might purify to Himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. Here then is the Foundation of all our Cleansing and Purification; Christ's Death procuring it.

2. As He hath procured, so He sendeth the Spirit to effect this, and to work this Washing and Sanctification in us. Hence it is said, *1. Cor. vi. 11. that we are sanctified and washed in the Name of the LORD Jesus, and by the Spirit of our GOD. We are said to be saved by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, Tit. iii. 5. 6. The sending then, or shedding, of the Holy Spirit upon us, whereby we are sanctified, purified and purged from our Filth, is a Fruit of Christ's Death and Mediation, being purchased thereby, and of his Resurrection and Glorification, and Intercession in Glory.*

3. He hath purchased and provided the external Means, whereby this Cleansing and Sanctification is brought about, viz. the Preaching of the Gospel. *John xv. 3. Now are ye clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you. Eph. v. 26. The Church is sanctified and cleaned with the Washing of Water, by the Word.*

6. He hath confirmed and ratified all the Promises of the Covenant, which are ample and large, touching this Cleansing and Washing, *I will cleanse them from all their Iniquity, whereby they have sinned*

ned against Me. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your Filthiness. And all the other Promises of the Covenant, apprehended by Faith, have no small Influence on our Cleansing, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having therefore these Promises, let us cleanse ourselves.

Secondly, As to the Way of our using Christ for the purging away of our Filth and Pollution, Believers should take this Course:

1. THEY should live in the Conviction of the exceeding Abominableness and Filthiness of Sin, which is compared to the Vomit of a Dog, and to the Mire wherein the Sow walloweth, 2 Pet. ii. 22. that this may move them to seek with greater Care and Diligence to have that Filth washed away.

2. THEY should remember also, how abominable Sin maketh them in the Eye of an Holy God, and how that no unclean Thing can enter into the new Jerusalem. And that will make them so much the more to abhor it, and to seek to be washed from it.

3. THEY should look by Faith upon the Blood of Christ, that is shed for this End, to wash filthy Souls in; and run to it as a Fountain opened for this End, that they might come to it, and wash and be clean.

4. THEY should grasp by Faith the Promises of the new Covenant.

5. AND remember the End of Christ's Death, to purchase to Himself a holy People, zealous of good Works; to present them to Himself holy, and

and without Spot and Wrinkle, or any such Thing.

6. THEY should put the Work by Faith in his Hand, who hath best Skill to wash a foul Soul, and to purge away all their Spots; and by Faith pray for and expect the Spirit to sanctify and cleanse them from all their Filthiness; that is, they should spread forth their Abominations before the LORD and eying *Christ* as the only great High Priest, whose Blood is a Fountain to wash in, should lay the Work on Him, and by Faith put Him to wash away that Filth, and to purify their Souls by his Spirit, pardoning their past Iniquities, and renewing them in the Spirit of their Minds by Grace, that they may walk before Him in fear. Thus they should roll the Work on Him, and leave it there.

1. THE Believer should in all this Work be kept in the Exercise of these Graces following.

(1.) OF Humility, seeing what a vile filthy Wretch he is that stands in Need of Washing and Purging daily.

(2.) OF Love, considering with what a loving God he hath to do, that hath provided so liberally all Things for him, and particularly hath provided a Fountain, and such a Fountain, whereto he not only may but is commanded to resort daily.

(3.) OF Thankfulness, remembering how great this Mercy is, how unworthy he is on whom it is bestowed, and who He is that doth grant it.

(4.) OF

(4.) OF Fear, lest God's Goodness be abused, and He provoked, who is so gracious to us.

(5.) OF Sincerity and godly Ingenuity; avoiding all Hypocrisy and Formality, knowing that we have to do with Him who will not be mocked.

(6.) OF holy Hatred, Loathing and Abhorrence of Sin, which maketh us so filthy and odious in the Eyes of the LORD.

2. THIS Course should be followed for the purging away the least Sins: for, 'till they be purged away, we remain in our Filth, and cannot expect GOD's favourable Countenance, nor the Intimations of his Love and Kindness. And a small Spot may grow greater, and provoke GOD to let the Accuser of the Brethren, *Satan*, loose upon us.

3. THIS Course should be followed with every Sin quickly, without Delay: For the longer those Spots continue, it will be the more difficult to get them taken away; the Soul will after some Time become the less troubled about them, and possibly forget them, and so they will remain; and this may occasion at least a sad Distance, and provoke GOD to hide his Face. It were good then to keep up a Spirit of Tenderness and Fear.

4. LET this be our daily Work. Yesterday's cleansing will not save us from new Filth To-day; nor will our running to the Fountain To-day, serve to take away new Spots To-morrow: New Spots call for new Washing; so that this must be our very Life and Exercise, to be continually running to the Fountain with our Souls, and giving *Christ*, the great Purger, much to do.

5. LET the Believers Recourse in this Matter be wholly to *Jesus Christ*, and his Blood, lay no Weight on their Sorrow, Repentance or Tears, or any outward Means which they are commanded to use: Yet should they not lay aside these Means; but go thro' them to the Fountain, to *Jesus*, there and there only to be cleansed.

6. WHEN all this is done, we must think of having on another Righteousness as our Cloathing and Covering in the Day of our Appearance before our Judge, even the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*, which only is able to save us from the Wrath of God. Let us be never so washed in Sanctification, and cleansed from our Spots, we cannot for all that be accounted Righteous before God; nor will that satisfy Justice, or take away the Guilt so much as of one Transgression.

7. AT every Time we run to the Fountain with our new contracted Filth, we should not forget to carry along with us the Mother-corruption, which is the Sink of all Filthiness; I mean, our natural Rottenness and Pollution, from whence flow all our other actual Pollutions. We should do well to carry Mother and Daughter both together to the Fountain. *David* prayeth to be purged as well from his original Filthiness wherein he was conceived and born, as from his Blood-guiltiness, *Psal.* li. 5, 7.

8. LET not this occasion our Carelessness in watching against Sin, for that would be to turn his Grace into Wantonness; but rather let it sharpen our Diligence in watching against all Occasions of Sin, lest we again defile our Souls.

9. NOT

9. NOT only must we have our Bodies, our outward Conversation washed, but our Souls within, the Frame of our Heart, our Understanding, Will Affections and Consciences, sprinkled with that Blood. The Blood of *Christ*, who thro' the eternal Spirit offered Himself without Spot to God, must *purge our Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God*, Heb. ix. 14. And we must have our *Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience*.

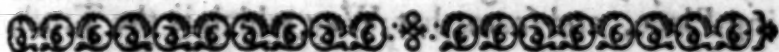
Finally, If the Believer fear that he shall not be able to remember all these particular Duties, let him remember this, to put a soul Soul, defiled with original and actual Pollutions, in *Christ's* Hand daily, and leave it with Him to wash by his Blood and Spirit, and yet remember to lay the Weight of his Acceptance before God, upon the imputed Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*, and not upon his own Cleanness when thus sanctified.

THUS have we endeavoured to clear up *Christ's* being the Way to the Father, first and last; and how all Believers or Unbelievers are to make Use of Him, as the Way to the Father, whatever their Condition be. From all which we may see, 1. That such are in a wretched and forlorn Condition, who are still Strangers to *Christ*, and will not lay hold on Him, nor come to Him, and walk in Him, and make use of Him: They are unrighteous and unholy, and daily contracting more Guilt and more Filth; and they know no Way either for Justification or Sanctification; but a Way of self, which will prove like the Brooks which run dry in Summer, and disappoint the weary Traveller when he hath most Need. They are without *Christ*, and so without the Way, the only Way, the safe and sure Way to the Father. And oh if all that is here spoken could induce

them to think once of the Misery of their Condition, and to seek out for Relief, that they might not only be saved from their State of Sin and Misery, but brought into a State of Salvation thro' *Jesus Christ*; so that they might be justified before God, from all that Justice, the Devil, or Conscience could lay against them; and thoroughly sanctified, and so at length brought home to the Father, fair and spotless! 2. Upon the other Hand, we see the Advantage of Believers, who thro' Grace are entred into this Way; for it is a Way, that shall carry them safe home: They shall find that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God thro' Him. And O, if they were sensible of this, how would it excite them to Thankfulness! How would it encourage them to run through Difficulties great and many! 3. We see what a special Duty lieth upon Believers to make special Use of *Christ* in all Things as the Way to the Father, and so march to Heaven in Him as the only Way, march in his Hands, or rather be carried in his Arms and Bosom. This were to go from Strength to Strength, till at length they appeared in *Sion*, and landed where the Weary are at Rest, and yet rest not Day nor Night, but sing Praises to Him that hath redeemed them by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, saying, Blessing, Honour, Glory and Power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever, Rev. v. 9, 13, 14. Hence we may see the Cause of the Leanness of Believers, of their Wandrings, of their many Defilements, viz. their not constant making Use of *Christ* as the Way in all Things, according to the Tenor of the Gospel. Oh if this were laid to Heart and mourned for, and if Grace were sought to help it!

THIS

THIS one Point of Truth, *That Christ is the Way*, well understood, and rightly put into Practice, would do all our Businels both as to *Justification* and *Sanctification*: And were poor Sinners once entered into this Way, and had they Grace to walk in it, it would prove their Life and Salvation; for it is the Marrow and Substance of the whole Gospel.



C H A P. X.

Some Generals, clearing how Christ is the Truth.

FOR clearing of this, we first take Notice of some Generals, then shew particularly how *Christ* is called the Truth; and finally speak to some Cases wherein we are to make Use of *Christ* as the Truth.

As to the first; there are four Things here to be noticed.

First, WHAT our Case by Nature is, and what we are all without *Christ* the Truth.

1st. WITHOUT *Christ* we are in Darkness, Mistakes, Errors: Yea, we are said to be Darkness itself. *Ye were sometimes Darkness*, Eph. v. 8. and of *Darkness*, 1 Thess. v. 5. yea, under the Power of *Darkness*, Col. i. 13. walking in *Darkness*, 1 John i. 6. and abiding in *Darkness*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. yea, we are all gone astray, Isa. liii. 6. So far are we from any Knowledge of or Acquaintance with Truth, or the Way of Truth.

2dly. WE cannot turn into the right Way: A Spirit of Error leadeth us continually wrong; like Sheep we wander still, and weary ourselves in our Wandring, and so spend all our Labour and Pains in vain. Being under the Power of Untruth and Error, we cannot walk one Step right.

3dly. THOUGH all other Ways, besides Him who is the Way and the Truth, be false Ways and Bye-ways, leading us away from the true resting Place, and from that Way which is the Truth, yet we are ready to cleave to those false Ways, to catch at Shadows, and to lean to them, as if they were the Ways of Truth: Such as,

1. A GOOD Heart, which many may imagine they have, when they have Nothing less.

2. GOOD Intentions and Purposes for the Time to come, which such as were in Error, should never deceive themselves with.

3. AN harmless Life, a Foundation on which no wise Man, led by Truth, would build his Hopes of eternal Happiness.

4. AN outward, moral, civil Carriage, wherein a Heathen can outstrip many called Christians; so that it must be a poor Ground to found our Hopes upon.

5. OUTWARD Exercise of religious Duties, wherein a Pharisee may outstrip many: And yet, O how many build all their Hopes of Heaven upon this sandy Foundation.

6. THE Commendation of Ministers and Christians is that which many rest upon: A sad Proof of the Blindness of their Hearts.

7. THE

7. THE Way of good Works and Alms-deeds blindfold many, and shew that they were never led by *Christ* the Truth.

8. SOME Sorrow for Sin is another Way which People, Strangers to the Truth, deceive themselves with.

9. A COMMON Sort of Repentance, backed with some Kind of Amendment, is a Way that many rest in, though it lead to Destruction.

10. FREEDOM from Challenges of Conscience deceiveth many.

THOUGH these and such like Ways be dangerous, yea deadly; yet, how many are there to be found among Christians, that have no better Ground of their Hope of Salvation, and will cleave to them so, as no Preaching will make them once question the Matter.

Fourthly, THERE is an Inclineableness in us by Nature to wander out of the Way; for being Nothing but a Mass of Error, made up of Darkness, Ignorance and Mistakes, we have a strong Bias to Error, which agreeth best with our natural corrupted Temper. Hence is it, that we have such a strong Propension to Error and Mistakes, whether,

1. CONCERNING GOD, and his Way of dealing with his Church or with ourselves. O! how ready are our Hearts to hatch and foment wrong, unseemly, untrue, if not blasphemous Conceptions of his Nature, Attributes, Word and Works? And how ready are we to receive and entertain wrong Apprehensions of all his Ways and Dealings with his Church and People? And as for his Works
in

in and about ourselves, O what unsuitable, erroneous, absurd and abominable Opinions do we drink in, and foster, yea, feed upon with Delight? Who is able to recount all the Errors and Mistakes which our Heart is ready to admit and foster? Are we not by Nature ready to say that there is not a GOD, or that He is not such a GOD as his Word and Works declare Him to be, a holy, just, righteous, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient GOD, or that He hath forgotten to be gracious, and remembreth not his People in Adversity, and so is not tender and merciful; that He hath forgotten his Promises, and so is not faithful and true; that He approveth of Sin, because He suffereth the Way of the Wicked to prosper, and so is not an Holy GOD? All which sheweth how prone we are to receive and entertain erroneous Thoughts of GOD.

2. CONCERNING ourselves, supposing ourselves to be born again and reconciled to GOD, when yet we are living in black Nature: And who so bold and confident that they are right, as such as are furthest out of the Way? Or supposing ourselves in a good Condition, lively, active, diligent, watchful, when it is just otherwise with us; or, in questioned Matters, making Truth to be Error, and Error to be Truth.

3. CONCERNING others. How ready are we to run either to the one Extremity or the other, in judging their Persons and Actions?

Next, How miserable must their Condition be, who are yet Strangers to *Christ*? For they are living in Darkness, lying in Darkness, walking in Darkness, yea, very Darkness itself, a Mass of Error, Mistakes, Ignorance and Misconceptions of all Things

Things that are good, and still wandering out of the Way.

Finally, SHOULD not this convince us all of a Necessity of having more Acquaintance with Truth, with *Jesus Christ* who is the Truth, that we may be delivered from this wretched Condition? For Truth only can set us free therefrom.

THE *second* general Thing to be noticed here is, that all other Ways which we can take that we may obtain Life, beside *Christ*, are but Lies, false and deceitful Ways; there is no Truth in them: For He only is the Truth; no other whatsoever can bear this Epithet. For,

1. HE only can satisfy the Soul in all Points: Other Ways, whatever we may dream, can yield no true Satisfaction in this Matter.

2. HE only can secure the Soul from Destruction: All other Ways will fail here; none of them can give the least Security to the Soul, that they shall not bring him to Destruction and everlasting Perdition.

3. HE only can bring the Soul safe through all Opposition and Difficulties in the Way: No other Way can do this, but will leave us in the Mire ere we come to the End of our Journey.

O WHAT a Warning should this be to us all to take Heed that we embrace not a Lye instead of Him who is the Truth, and sit not down with a Shadow instead of the Substance! How ready are we to put other Things in his Place? But whatever gets his Room in the Soul, will prove a Lye. Even, 1. All our outward Holiness and Duties :
Yea,

Yea, 2. All our Experiences and great Attainments :
 Yea, 3. All our Gifts and Enducements : Ay, 4.
 Our very Graces : None of these are *Christ* ; and if
 we place that Confidence in them, which we should
 place on Him, they will not prove the Truth to
 us.

How sure then should we labour to be, that we
 do not die with a Lye in our Right-hand ? And
 how carefully should we guard against the trusting
 in, or leaning to, any Thing that is not *Christ*,
 and whole *Christ*, and only *Christ*, and *Christ* as
 offered in the Gospel ? Seeing this Way is only the
 Truth, and no other Way will be found so in the
 End.

THE *third* General is this, *Christ*. *Jesus* is not
 only the Truth in Himself, but also in Reference to
 us. As He is the Way and the Life, for our Use ;
 so He is the Truth : Not only as God equal with
 the Father, but also as Mediator, and our *Imma-*
nuel.

As God, He is, 1. Essentially Truth, being God
 equal with the Father in Power and Glory.

2. In Respect of Veracity, He is the God of
 Truth, *Deut.* xxxii. 4. Faithful in all his Say-
 ings, *Psal.* xxxi. 5. Keeping Truth for ever, *Psal.*
 cxlvi. 6.

3. He is the Fountain and Spring-head of all
 created Truth ; for He is the first Truth.

As Mediator, and in Reference to us, He is full
 of Grace and Truth, *John* i. 14. He receiveth not
 the Spirit in Measure, *John* iii. 34. And this Spi-
 rit is a Spirit of Truth. But of this more, when
 we

we come to shew more particularly how He is called the Truth, as Mediator.

THE *fourth* General, which is here observable, is, that He is not only called Truth, but the Truth, as He is the Way, and the Life; and not only true, but Truth in the Abstract: Which saith,

1. THAT He is every Way Truth, however we consider Him, as GOD, or as Mediator.

2. THAT all Truth is in Him: All Truth of Salvation for us is to be found in Him.

3. THAT all that is in Him is Truth, his Natures, Offices, Performances, Words, Works, all are true.

4. THAT He is pure and unmixed Truth: No Lye in Him, no Error or Mistake there.

5. THAT Truth in Him is in its Perfection and Excellency: In the truest of Men it is very imperfect.

O WHAT an excellent One must He be? How compleatly fitted for us? Oh if our Souls could love Him, and close with Him, and rest upon Him as All-sufficient!



C H A P. XI.

More particularly, in what Respects Christ is called the Truth.

BUT, for further explaining of this Matter, we should see more particularly in what Respects He is called the Truth.

First, HE is the Truth, in Opposition to the Shadows and Types of Him under the Law: Hence, as *the Law* (the whole *Levitical* and typical Dispensation) *came by Moses*; so *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, *John i. 17.* They were all Shadows of Him, and He is the Substance and Body of them all; and this is true in these Respects,

1. ALL these Shadows and Types pointed at Him, and directed as with a Finger the *Israelites*, who were under that Dispensation, to look to *Christ* the promised Messiah, and to rest and to lay all their Weight on Him.

2. THEY all terminate in Him, He putting an End, by his coming and performing his Work, to all those Types, which only related to Him, and to what He was to do. The Body being come, there is no more Need of the Shadow; and the Thing typified existing, there is no more Need of Use of the Type.

3. THEY

3. THEY are all fulfilled in Him, He answereth them all fully: So that whatever was shadowed forth by them, is compleatly to be found in Him.

Secondly, He is the Truth, in Reference to the Prophecies of old, all which did principally point at Him and his Concernments, his Person, Nature, Offices, Work, Kingdom; and whatever was foretold in these Prophecies, is perfectly fulfilled in Him, or done by Him, or shall in due Time be effected by Him. *To Him gave all the Prophets Witness*, Acts x. 43. And whatever they prophesied or witnessed of Him was, or is in due Time to be, fulfilled in Him. Hence we find the Evangelists and Apostles frequently applying the Sayings and Prophecies of the Old Testament unto Him; and, *Luke* iv. 18. Himself said, that the Prophecy of *Isaiah* lxi. 1, &c. was fulfilled in Him: And Himself expounded to the two Disciples going to *Emmaus*, in all the Scriptures, beginning at *Moses* and all the Prophets, all the Things concerning Himself, *Luke* xxiv. 27. Thus is He the Truth of all the Prophecies.

Thirdly, HE is the Truth, in Respect of his Offices, which He took upon Him for our Good: For all the Duties of these Offices, which He was to do, and what remaineth to be done, He will perfect in due Time. Did He take upon Him the Office of a Prophet? He did fully execute the same, in revealing mediately and immediately the whole Counsel of GOD. Did He take upon Him the Office of a Priest? So did He fulfil the same, offering up Himself an expiatory Sacrifice to GOD, becoming a Priest, living for ever to make Intercession for us. Did He take on Him the Office of a King? So doth He execute the same, calling a People to Himself out of the World by his Word

and Spirit, erecting a visible Church to profess and declare his Name, which, as his Kingdom, He ruleth with his own Officers, Laws, and Penalties or Censures; so that the Government is on his Shoulders, who is the Head of the Body, the Church. And this his Kingdom He ruleth in a visible Manner, by his own Officers, &c. And further, He executes this Office, by effectually calling his People, giving them Grace, rewarding the Obedient, chastising the Disobedient, bringing them Home at length, through all their Temptations, Afflictions, and overcoming all their Enemies; and at length He shall do the Part of a King, when He shall judge Quick and Dead at the last Day.

Fourthly, He is the Truth in this Regard, that He fully answereth all the Titles and Names which He got. As He was called *Jesus*, so did He save his People from their Sins: As He was called *Christ*, so was He anointed with the Spirit without Measure, and separated for his Work, and endued with all Power for that Effect; and established to be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. Was He called *Immanuel*? So was He indeed God with us, being God and Man in one Person for ever. Was He called *Wonderful*? So was He indeed in his two distinct Natures in one Person. Was He called *Counsellor*? So was He indeed, coming from the Father's Bosom, with the whole Counsel of God concerning our Salvation. Was He called the *mighty God*? So was He indeed. The *everlasting Father*? So is He the Father of Eternity, being (as some interpret the Word) the Author of eternal Life, which He giveth to all that believe in Him. Was He called the *Prince of Peace*? So is He the Prince of Peace, making Peace betwixt God and us. Was He called the

LORD

the Truth, and the Life. III

LORD our Righteousness? So is He the same, being made of GOD to us Righteousness, and making us righteous.

Fifthly, HE is the Truth, in Reference to the Promises, which,

1. CENTER all in Him, and lead to Him, as the great Promise.

2. ARE founded all upon Him, who is the only Mediator of the Covenant of Promises.

3. ARE confirmed all by Him, and made Yea and Amen in Him. He confirmed the Promises made to the Fathers.

4. ARE all dispensed and given out by Him, who is the Executor of his own Testament, and the great Dispensator of all that we need; so that what we ask of the Father, He giveth Himself.

Sixthly, HE is the Truth, in that He fully answereth all the Hopes and Expectations of his People. He shall not be found a Liar unto them, whatever *Satan* may suggest unto them, or a misbelieving Heart may prompt them to conceive, and whatever his Dispensations may now seem to say. In the End they shall all find, that He is the Truth, fully satisfying all their Desires, and granting all that ever they could hope for, or expect from Him. They shall at length be satisfied with his Likeness, yea, abundantly satisfied with the Fateness of his House, and with his Goodness.

Seventhly, HE is the Truth, in Opposition to all other Ways of Salvation: For,

1. THERE is no Salvation now by the Law of Works; that Covenant, being once broken, cannot any more save.

2. THERE is no Salvation now by the Law of Moses, without Christ: Hence Israel, which followed after the Law of Righteousness, did not attain to the Law of Righteousness, because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law, Rom. ix. 31, 32. They went about to establish their own Righteousness, and did not submit themselves unto the Righteousness of GOD.

3. THERE is no Salvation by any Thing mixed with Christ, as the Apostle fully clearerth in his Epistle to the Galatians.

4. THERE is no Salvation by any other Way which Man can invent, whereof there are not a few: For, there is not another Name given under Heaven, by which we can be saved, but the Name of Jesus, Acts iv. 12.

So that He is the true Salvation, and He only is the true Salvation, and is the sure and safe Salvation; such as make Use of Him, shall not be mistaken nor disappointed.

Eighthly, HE is the Truth, in Respect of his leading and guiding his People in the Truth; And this upon several Accounts;

1. Of his *personal Teaching*. GOD spoke by Him, Heb. i. 2. He revealed the Father's Mind, Matt. xi. 27.

2. Of his *Messengers sent by Him*, as Prophets of old, Apostles and Ministers of late, whom He sendeth

sendeth forth to make Disciples, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. and to open the Eyes of the Blind, *Acts* xxvi. 18.

3. OF his *Word*, which He hath left as our Rule.

4. OF his *Ordinances*, which He hath established as Means to guide us in the Way of Truth.

5. OF his *Spirit*, whereby He maketh the Word clear, *John* xiv. 26. This Spirit is sent to teach all Truth, and to lead and guide in all Truth, and sent by Him, and by the Father in his Name, *John* xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 14.

6. OF his *Dispensations of Providence*, within us and without us, by which likewise He instructeth in the Way of Truth.

Ninthly, HE is the Truth, in Respect of his bearing Witness to Truth: And this He doth,

1. BY Himself, who *was given for a Witness*, *Ma.* lv. 4. and *came to bear Witness to the Truth*, *John* xviii. 37. and *was a faithful Witness*, *Rev.* i. 5. and iii. 14.

2. BY his Ministers, who witness the Truth of the Gospel, publishing and proclaiming the same.

3. BY his Martyrs, who seal the Truth with their Blood, and so bear Witness to it.

4. BY his Spirit, sealing the Truth of Grace in a Believer, and his Interest in GOD thro' *Christ*, and his Right to all the Benefits of the new Covenant.

Tenthly, HE is the Truth, in Respect that He carrieth towards poor Sinners, in all Things, according to the Tenor of the Gospel, and the Offers thereof: He offers Himself to all freely, and promiseth to put none away that come to Him; and this He doth in Truth: For no Man can say, that He had a sincere Desire to come to *Jesus Christ*, and that He rejected him. He giveth Encouragement to all Sinners to come that will be content to quit their Sins, and promiseth to unbraid none that cometh; and, is there any that in their own Experience can witness the contrary? He offers all freely; and did He ever reject any upon the Want of a Price in their Hand? Nay, hath not the Cause of their getting no Admittance been, that they thought to commend themselves to *Christ* by their Worth, and would not take all freely, for the Glory of his Grace? Let Believers, and others speak their Experience in Uprightness, and it shall be found that He was and is the Truth.



C H A P. XII.

*How to make Use of CHRIST, as the Truth,
for Growth in Knowledge.*

IT is a commanded Duty, that we grow in the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*. And the Knowledge of Him being *Life eternal*, and our Measure of Knowledge of Him here being but imperfect, for we know but in Part; it cannot but be a useful Duty, and a desirable Thing to be growing in this Know-

Knowledge. This is to walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, to be increasing in the Knowledge of God, Col. i. 10. Knowledge must be added unto Virtue; and it layeth a Ground for other Christian Virtues, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. In this Knowledge we must not be barren, 2 Pet. i. 8. And this being so necessary, so desirable, and so advantageous a Grace, the Believer cannot but desire to have more and more of it; especially seeing it is a Part of the Image of God, Col. iii. 10.

Now, it is the Truth that must teach them here, first and last. The *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God* must be had in the Face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. The Question therefore is, How we should make Use of Jesus Christ for this End, that we may attain more of this excellent Knowledge?

For clearing this, I shall propose these Directions;

First, IT is good to live in the constant Conviction of a Necessity of his teaching us. And this taketh in these Particulars,

1. WE should be conscious of our Ignorance, even when we know most, remembering that the best knoweth but in Part: The more true Knowledge we attain, the more shall we see and be convinced of our Ignorance; because, the more we know, the more shall we discover of the Vastness and Incomprehensibility of that Object which is proposed to our Knowledge.

2. WE should remember how deceitful our Hearts are, and how ready they are to sit down upon a Shadow of Knowledge, even when we
know

know nothing as we ought to know ; and this will keep us jealous and watchful.

3. AND to help forward our Jealousy of our own Hearts, we should remember, that our Hearts naturally are averse from any true and saving Knowledge : Whatever Desire there be naturally after Knowledge of hidden Things, out of Curiosity, yet there is no Inclination after spiritual and saving Knowledge in us naturally, but an Aversion of Heart therefrom.

4. We should study and know the absolute Necessity of this Knowledge ; how necessary it is for our Christian Communion with God, and Christian Walk with others ; how necessary for our right improving of Dispensations general and particular ; what a noble Ornament of a Christian it is, and a necessary Piece of the Image of God, which we have lost.

Secondly, UPON these Grounds we should also be convinced of this, That of ourselves, and by all our natural Parts, Endowments and Sagacity, we cannot attain this saving Knowledge, which must be wrought in the Soul by a Divine Hand. By our private Study and Reading we may attain to a literal and speculative Knowledge, that will puff us up ; but thereby shall we never attain to this Knowledge, which is spiritual, practical, and saving. We must have the Anointing here, which teacheth us all Things.

Thirdly, THERE should be a constant, diligent, and serious using the Means of Knowledge, with a faithful Dependence on *Christ* by Faith, cleaving to Him in his Relations, Offices, Engagements
and

and Promises, and waiting upon his Breathing in Hope and Patience.

Fourthly, THERE should be a guarding against every Thing that may obstruct this Work, and grieve Him in it: And therefore we should be-ware,

1. To undervalue Knowledge: For this will grieve Him, and, to speak so, put Him from Work.

2. To grow weary of the Means and Ordinances whereby He useth to convey Knowledge to the Soul.

3. To limit the Holy One of *Israel* to this or that Mean, to this or that Time, or to this or that Measure.

4. To despise the Day of small Things, because we get not more.

5. To be too curious in seeking after the Knowledge of hidden Mysteries, the Knowledge whereof is not necessary.

6. To depend too much upon the Ordinances or Instruments, as if all or any Thing could come from them.

Fifthly, THERE should be a right improving of any Measure of Knowledge we get, to his Glory and to the Edification of others, with Humility and Thankfulness; and so a putting of that Talent in Use, to gain more to his Glory: Whatever Measure of Knowledge we get, we should in all
Haste

Haste set it to work ; so shall it increase, and engage Him to give more.

Sixthly, THERE should be a lying open to *Christ's* Instructions, and to the Shinings of the Spirit of Light and of Truth, and a ready receiving of what Measure He is pleased to grant. Which includeth these Duties ;

1. A SERIOUS and earnest hungring and thirsting after more spiritual Knowledge.
2. A DILIGENT Use of every Mean for this End.
3. A GOING about the Means with much Self-denial, Spirituality, Singleness of Heart and Sincerity, looking to and depending upon Him, who must breathe upon the Means, and make them useful.
4. A GREEDY receiving, drinking in, and treasuring up in the Soul, what is gotten.
5. A GUARDING against selfish Ends, with a single eying of his Glory.
6. A GUARDING against Pride in the Heart, and a studying of Humility and Meekness ; for *the Meek will He guide in Judgment, and the Meek will He teach his Way.*
7. A PUTTING the Heart or Understanding in his Hand, together with the Truth that is heard and received, that He may write the Truth in the Heart, and cause the Heart to receive the Impression of that Truth.

Se venthly,

Seventhly, THERE should be a rolling of the whole Matter by Faith on Him as the only Teacher; a putting of the ignorant, blockish, perverse Heart into his Hand, that He may frame it to his own Mind; and leaving of it there, 'till He by his Spirit write in it what He thinketh meet, to his own Glory, and our Good.

AND sure, were this Way followed, Growth in Knowledge would not be so rare a Thing as it is.

FOR further Direction in this Matter, the Believer should take Notice of these Particulars;

1. THAT he should not sit down upon any Measure of Knowledge he hath attained, or can attain to here, as if he had enough, and should labour for no more; but should still be seeking and pressing for more.

2. WHENEVER he is about any Mean of Knowledge, such as Preaching, Reading, Conference, his Heart should be only upon *Christ*; he should be hanging on his Lips for a Word of Instruction, and with Greediness looking for a Word from his Mouth; he should be sending many Posts to Heaven, many ejaculatory Desires for Light and Understanding, and that with Singleness and Sincerity, and not for base Ends, or out of Hypocrisy.

3. LET him not think that there is no Growth in Knowledge, because possibly he perceiveth it not, or is not satisfied as to the Measure thereof, yea, tho' possibly he perceiveth more Ignorance than ever he did before: If he grow in the Knowledge of his own Ignorance, it is a Growth of Know.

Knowledge not to be despised. And in a Manner what can we else know of GOD, but that He far transcendeth all our Knowledge?

4. LET him not think that there is no Growth in Knowledge, because he perceiveth not a Growth in the Knowledge of such or such a Particular; for, if there be a Growth in the Knowledge of other Particulars necessary to be known, there is no Reason to complain. If one grow not, as he supposeth, in the Knowledge of GOD, and of the Mysteries of the Gospel; yet, if he grow in the Discovery of the Treachery of his own Heart, he cannot say he groweth not in Knowledge.

5. LET him not measure his Growth in Knowledge, by his Growth in the Faculty of Discoursing of such or such Points of Religion: Many measure their Knowledge by their Tongue, and think they know little because they can express little; and so they think they attain no Increase in Knowledge, because they perceive no Increase in this Faculty of Discoursing. It is safer to measure their Knowledge by the Impression that the Truth hath on their Spirits, and the Effects of it on all their Carriage, than by their Ability to talk and dispute of it.

6. LET them beware to imagine that they shall be able to search out the Almighty unto Perfection. *It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* Or that they shall be able ever to go to the Bottom of their own deceitful Heart: Neither let them think, so long as they are here, to come to an exact and perfect Knowledge of the Mysteries of GOD.

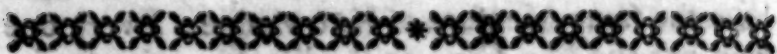
7. LET

7. LET them not think that every one shall have the same Measure of Knowledge: Every one hath not the like Use, or the like Capacity for it; there is a Measure proportioned to every one. They should not then complain, because they have not such a Measure of Knowledge as they perceive in some others; it may be, the LORD hath some harder Piece of Service, which calleth for more Knowledge, to put others to. Let every one mind his Duty faithfully and conscientiously, and not quarrel with God, that he attaineth not such a Measure of Knowledge as he seeth others attain.

8. LET their Desires run out after that Knowledge, not which puffeth up, but which humbleth and driveth the Soul further from itself, and nearer to *Christ*.

9. WHEN they do not profit indeed, let them beware of quarrelling with *Christ*, or of blaming Him in any Manner of Way; but let them lay the Blame on themselves, for not making more Use of Him by Faith, and single Dependence upon Him. It is true, none will be so bold as in Words to quarrel with or blame Him; yet the Heart tacitly may raise and foment such Thoughts of Him, and his Dispensations, as can pass under no other Notion than a quarrelling with Him.

10. WHATEVER Point of Truth they learn, or whatever Measure of Knowledge they get, they would do well to give that back again to *Christ*, to keep for them against a Time of Need, and wait on Him for Grace to improve it for his Glory.



C H A P. XIII.

How to make Use of CHRIST, as Truth, when Truth is oppressed and borne down.

THERE is another Difficulty, wherein believing Souls will stand in Need of *Christ*, as *the Truth*, to help them; and that is, when his Work is overturned, his Cause borne down, Truth condemned, and Enemies, in their Opposition to his Work, prospering in all their Attempts. This is a very trying Dispensation, as we see it was to the holy Penman of Psalm lxxiii. for it made him to stagger, so that *his Feet were almost gone, and his Steps had well nigh slipt*; yea, he was almost repenting of his being a godly Person, saying, Verse 13, *Verily I have cleansed my Heart in vain, and washed my Hands in Innocency.* And that which evinceth the Danger of this Dispensation is the Fainting and Backsliding of many in such a Time of Trial.

Now, the Believer's Stay in this Case must be the Rock of Ages, *Jesus, the Truth*. It is He alone who can keep straight and honest in such a reeling Time: So that a Sight of *Christ*, as *the Truth*, in Reference to the carrying on of Truth in the Earth, will be the only Support of a Soul shaken by such a Trial.

BUT the Question is, How should Believers make Use of *Christ*, to the End that they may be kept

kept from fainting in such a Storm? To which answer, That the Faith and Consideration of these Particulars will help to Establishment :

1. CHRIST, in all this great Work of Redemption, and in every Piece of it, is the Father's Servant. So is He frequently called ; therefore this Work is a Work intrusted to Him, and He standeth engaged as a Servant to be faithful to his Trust. Moreover, He hath a Commission to perfect that Work ; and we need not doubt but He, who is *the Truth*, will be true to his Trust.

2. WHILE He was upon the Earth, He finished that Work that was committed to Him to finish here, having purchased all that was to be bought by his Blood, paying all the Price that Justice did ask, by which Price *He hath purchased a People to Himself*: So that his Work, Cause, and Interest, is a purchased Work, *bought with his Blood*.

3. His Resurrection and Glorification is an undoubted Proof of this, that Justice is satisfied, and that the Price is fully paid ; also his Exaltation at the Father's Right Hand is a sure Evidence and Ground of Hope, that He shall at last triumph over all his Enemies, and that his Work of Truth shall prosper. The Father said to Him, Psalm cx. *Sit Thou on my Right Hand, untill I make thine Enemies thy Footstool. Being highly exalted, He hath got a Name above every Name, that at his Name every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth ; and that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the Glory of GOD the Father, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.*

4. THE Father standeth engaged to make good to Him all that was promised, and to give Him all that He purchased, *Isaiab liii. 10, 11, 12.* *Christ* having now fulfilled his Undertaking, by making his Soul an Offering for Sin, and so satisfying Justice, which is openly declared by his Resurrection and Admission to Glory, is to expect the Accomplishment of what was conditioned unto Him. His Work therefore on the Earth must prosper; and the Father hath undertaken to see it prosper. Sure the Faith of this should much support a poor Soul, staggering at the Thoughts of the Prosperity of the Wicked, and of their Cause.

5. CHRIST Himself is now thoroughly furnished and enabled for the carrying on of his Work, over the Belly of all Adversaries; for *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given to Him, Matt. xxviii. 18.* And every Knee must bow to Him, *Phil. ii. 10.* All Judgment is committed unto Him, *John v. 22, 27.* Angels, Powers and Authority are made subject unto Him, *1 Pet. iii. 22.* Yea, *all Things are under Him, Eph. i. 22.* How then can this Work miscarry? Or, who can hinder that Truth should not flourish in the Earth?

6. CHRIST is actually at Work, employing this Power for the carrying forward of his Design, for the Glory of the Father, and for his own Glory, and for the Good of his poor People. The Father worketh by Him, and He by the Spirit, who is his great Vicegerent, sent from the Father and from Him; and his Work is to glorify the Son, and shall receive of His and shew it unto us, *John xvi. 14.*

7. CHRIST, upon many Accounts, standeth engaged to perfect this Work, which He hath begun,
and

and is about. His Honour is engaged to go through, seeing now He is fully furnished for it, and hath all the Creation at his Command. He must then perfect his Work as to the Application, as well as He did perfect it as to the Purchase: His Love to his Father's and his own Glory, and to his own People's Good and Salvation, may assure us, that He will not leave the Work unperfected; and his Power may give us full Security that no Stop which his Work meeteth with shall be able to hinder it.

8. HENCE it is clear and manifest, that his Wheel is in the Midst of the Wheels of Men, and that therefore He is ordering all their Motions and Reelings to the best. His Wheel keepeth an even Pace, and moveth equally and equably, in the Midst of Mens contrary Motions.

9. THEREFORE all the irregular Motions of Devils and wicked Men, being in his Hand, cannot hinder but further his End; so that even Enemies, while opposing and seeking to destroy the Cause of *Christ*, are promoting his Work. His Wheel is the great Wheel that ordereth all the lesser and subordinate Wheels, whatever contrary Motions they may have the one to the other, and all or many of them may seem to have to this great Wheel. So that, do they what they will, the Work of our LORD goeth on: Their Opposition is setting his Work forward, though they intend the contrary; however their Faces look, they row to the Port He would be at. This is an undoubted Truth, and confirmed in all Ages, and yet it is not firmly believed; and a Truth it is, which, if believed, would do much to settle our staggering Souls in a stormy Day.

10. AT last *He shall come to be glorified in his Saints, when He shall be revealed from Heaven with all his mighty Angels.* Then shall it be seen whose Counsel shall stand, His or Mens; and whose Work shall prosper, His or Satan's.

YET let me add a few Words for Caution.

1. THE Consideration of those Things mentioned should not make us slacken our Diligence in Prayer and other Duties; and, when they are right considered, they will rather prove a Spur to set us forward, than a Bridle to hold us back.

2. WE should not think that *Christs* Work and Interest is going backward, when it seemeth so to us. Even when He is casting down what He hath built up, and plucking up what He hath planted, his Work is prospering; for all that is in order to the laying a better Foundation, and to the carrying on of a more glorious Work, when *He shall lay all the Stones with fair Colours, and the Foundations with Sapphires, and make the Windows of Crystal.*

3. THOUGH his Work be always going on, and his Truth prospering; yet we should not think that it will always prosper alike in our Apprehensions. Many Times we judge by Rules of our own making, and not by the Rule of Truth; and hence it is that we mistake oftentimes. We walk little by Faith, and too much by Sense; and hence we judge too much by Sense, and so pass a wrong Judgment, to his Dishonour, and the sadning of our own Hearts.

4. NOR should we think that his Truth and Interest is ruined and gone, because it is fore oppressed in this or that particular Place; as if his Work were

were not of an universal Extent, and in all the Churches. If his Truth prosper in some other Place of the World, shall we not say that his Kingdom is coming? Or, shall we limit all his Work and Interest to one small Part of the World?

5. WE should not think the worse of his Work, because it is carried on with so many Stops, and doth meet with so many Impediments in its Way. We are not acquainted with the Depths of his infinite Wisdom, and so we see not what noble Ends He hath before Him, in suffering those Impediments to lie in the Way of his Chariot: We think He should ride so triumphantly all along, that none should once dare to cast the least Block in his Way; but we judge carnally, as unacquainted with the many glorious Designs which He hath in ordering Matters. As Himself was for a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence; so will He have the Way of carrying on his Work prove, in his holy and spotless Justice, a Stumbling-stone to many, that shall stumble thereat, and fall and never rise more.

6. WE should beware to think that *Christ* hath forgotten his Work, because He seemeth to take no Notice of our Prayers for his Work. He may be doing that which we are desiring, in the general, and yet not let us know that He is answering our Prayers; and that for wise and holy Ends, to keep us humble and diligent. He may seem to disregard our Suits, and yet be carrying on his Work, and granting us our Desires.

7. HENCE we should beware of desponding, and growing heartless and faint, when we see few owning Truth, or standing upon *Christ's* Side; for He needeth not Man's Help to carry on his Work, though He sometimes thinketh good to honour some
to

to be instrumental in setting it forward, who yet have nothing but as He giveth. Let us not then think that his Work cannot prosper, because great ones and mean ones oppose it, and such as would stand for it, and own it, are but few and fainting, without Strength, Courage, or Zeal.

NEVERTHELESS when Enemies are prevailing, and the Truth evil spoken of, many faint, and many turn aside, and do not plead for Truth, nor stand up for the Interest of *Christ*, in the Hour and Power of Darkness; many are overcome with base Fear, and either side with the Workers of Iniquity, or are not valiant for the Truth, but turn back. Now, the Thoughts of this may put some, who desire to stand fast, and to own Him and his Cause in a Day of Trial, to enquire farther how they shall make Use of *Christ, the Truth*, so as to stand in the Day of Temptations, and to keep fast by Truth, when it is loaded with Reproaches, and buried under an Heap of Obloquy. For Satisfaction to this Question, I shall shortly point out those Directions, which, if followed, may prove helpful to keep the Soul from fainting, doubting, quarrelling at the LORD's Dispensations, and from yielding to Temptation in such a Day.

1. THE Believer should live in the Conviction of his Hazard through the Sleight of *Satan*, the Strength of the Temptation, the Wickedness of the Heart, the evil Example of others, and the Want of sanctified Courage, Zeal and Resolution; and this will keep the Soul humble, and far from boasting of its own Strength.

2. THEY should live in the Persuasion of this, That it is *Christ* alone who can help them to stand for Truth in a Day of Temptation; and that all
their

their former Purposes, Vows, Resolutions and Professions, will prove but weak Cables to hold them fast in a Storm; that only the Rock of Ages must save them, and their partaking of his safe Protection will do their Business; that all their Stock of Grace and Knowledge will help but little in that Day; and that new Influences of Grace and Truth from the Fountain, will only prove establishing to the Soul.

3. **THEREFORE** they should eye *Christ* in his Offices, particularly as the great *Prophet*, who can teach as never Man taught; so teach, as to make the Soul receive the Doctrine, and hold it fast, receive it in Love, and lay it up in the Heart.

4. **THEY** should eye Him in his Relations unto his People, as their *Head, Husband, Brother, Leader, Commander, Captain*; for those give Ground of approaching Him with Confidence, in the Day of Darkness, for Light and Direction, and for Strength and Courage in the Day of Temptation.

5. **THEY** should eye the Promises of Assistance in the Day of Calamity; such as those, *Isa. xliii. 2. When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee.* And particularly they should eye the Promises of Light in the Day of Darkness. See *Isa. lviii. 8, 10. and lx. 20. 2 Sam. xxii. 29.*

6. **THEY** should look on *Christ* as an exalted Conqueror, now risen and glorified; as a victorious Captain, that hath fought and overcome; that they, as his Followers, may be made Partakers of his Victory, and so reap the Fruit of his Resurrection

tion and Ascension, in their Establishment in the Truth, when it is borne down and questioned, yea, and condemned by Men. He abode stedfast and unmoveable in the Midst of all the Storms that blew in his Face: And as He came to witness the Truth, so did He faithfully and zealously avow it, even to the Death; and in Death got the Victory of the arch Liar and Deceiver. Now, the Believer should eye this, for the strengthening of his Faith and Hope of Victory also through Him; and therefore should wait patiently for his Help, and not make Haste; *for they who believe make not Haste*; knowing that He is true and faithful, and will not disappoint his Followers that trust in Him.

7. THEY should study much the grand Promise of his coming again, finally dispelling all Clouds, and fully clearing up his glorious Truths, that are now covered over with Obloquy, and buried under Reproaches: And this will encourage the Soul to stand to Truth in the Midst of all Opposition.

8. THEY should be single in their Dependence on Him for Strength in that Day of Trial; not leaning to their own Understanding, but *acknowledging Him in all their Ways*, Prov. iii. 6. And when they see no Hope, nor Appearance of the clearing up of the Day, they should comfort and encourage themselves in the LORD.

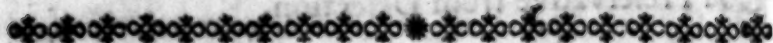
A FEW Words of Caution will be useful here also: As,

I. THE Believer, though taking this Course, should not think to be altogether free of Fear of stepping aside less or more: GOD may think good to let much of this abide, to the End he may be kept watchful, tender and diligent; for Fear maketh
the

the Soul circumspect and watchful, and this is a good Preservative from Defection.

2. **NOR** should the Believer think that hereby he shall be kept altogether free of fainting. The Heart now and then, through Fear and Misbelief, may fall into a Fit of Fainting, and think all is gone; and yet He may carry poor Souls through and *make his Strength perfect in their Weakness*; that, when they are carried through the Temptation, they may sing Praise to Him, and not ascribe any Thing to themselves; remembering how often they were fainting, and almost giving over the Cause as desperate.

3. **THEY** should not think it strange, if, in the Time of their wrestling with Difficulties, the **LORD** give them not that joyful Access unto Him in Prayer that sometimes they have met with: For the **LORD** may see it fit, to put them to this Point of Trial among the rest, to see if the Love of his Glory and Truth will keep them standing, when they want the Encouragements that might be expected in that Way; and if pure Conscience to the Command and Authority of **GOD** will keep them from siding with an evil Way.



C H A P. XIV.

*How to make Use of CHRIST as the Truth,
when the Spirit of Error carrieth many away.*

THERE is a Time when the Spirit of Error is going abroad, and many are led away with Delusions: For *Satan* can change himself into an Angel of Light, and make many fair Pretensions to Holiness, and under that Pretext usher in Untruths, and gain the Consent of many unto them; so that, in such a Time of Temptation, many are stolen off their Feet, and depart from the right Ways of GOD. Now the Question is, How a poor Believer shall make Use of *Christ, the Truth*, for keeping him stedfast in such a Day of Trial? For Satisfaction to this, we shall propose these few Things:

1. IN such a Time, when a Spirit of Error is let loose, and carrieth several away, it were good for all, who would be kept straight and honest, to be walking in Fear. It is not good to despise such a subtil Enemy, especially in the Hour and Power of Darkness. Then all are called to be on their Guard, and to stand upon their Watch-Tower, and to be jealous of their corrupt Hearts, that are ready of their own Accord to drink in Error, and to receive the Temptation at any Time, and much more then.

2. **THEY**

2. **THEY** should not think that their Knowledge and Ability to dispute for Truth, will keep them stedfast; for, if the Temptation grow, they may come to reason and dispute themselves out of all their former Knowledge. The Father of Lyes is a cunning Sophister, and knoweth how to shake their Grounds, and cast all loose.

3. **THEY** should renew their Covenant, and make sure that main Business, their Peace and Union with GOD and *Christ*. They should labour to have the Foundation sure, and to be united unto the chief Corner-stone; that so, blow the Storm as it will, they may ride safely; and that hereby they may have Access to *Christ* with Boldness, and may with Confidence seek Light from Him in the Hour of Darkness.

4. **THEY** should eye the Promises suiting that Case, viz. the Promises of GOD's *guiding the Blind by a Way which they know not; of making Darkness Light before them, and crooked Things straight; and of guiding continually.*

5. **PARTICULARLY**, they should fix their Eye, upon that principal *Promise of the Spirit, to guide into all Truth.*

6. **WITH** Singleness of Heart they should depend on *Christ*, and wait for Light from Him, and beware of Prejudice at the Truth: They should lie open to his Instructions, and receive the Beams of his Divine Light; and thus go about Duties, viz. Prayer, Conference, Preaching, Reading, with an Eye fixed on Him, and with a Soul open to Him.

7. **WITH** Singleness of Heart they should give up their Souls to *Christ as the Truth*, that He would

write the Truth in their Souls, and frame their Souls unto that Truth which is most questioned; and urge Him, by Prayer and Supplication, to do the Duty of an Head, an Husband, Guide and Commander unto them; and that He would be a Light unto them in that Day of Darkness, and not suffer them to dishonour Him, or prove scandalous to others, by departing from the Truth, and embracing Error.

FOR further clearing this, we shall hint at some Cautions; such as,

1. THEY should beware of thinking that God should come to them with Light and Instruction in an extraordinary Manner, and reveal the Truth of the Question controverted immediately: For this were a manifest *tempting and limiting the Holy One of Israel*. We must be satisfied with the Means of Instruction which He hath provided, and run to *the Law and to the Testimony*. We have the Scriptures, which are able to *make the Man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*. There must we seek Light, and wait for the breathing of his Spirit with Life, and coming with Light to clear up Truth to us. We have the Ministry, which God hath also appointed for this End: There must we wait for Him and his Light. Thus must we wait at the Posts of Wisdom's Doors, for the King of Light in his own Way. And, if He think good to come another Way more immediate, let Him always be welcome; but let us not limit Him, nor prescribe Ways to Him, but follow his Directions.

2. WHEN any Thing is borne in upon their Spirit, as a Truth to be received, or as an Error to be rejected, more immediately, they should be-
ware

were of admitting every such Thing without Trial and Examination: For we are expressly forbidden *to believe every Spirit*, and commanded to *try them whether they are of GOD*, 1 John iv. 1. The LORD will not take it ill that even his own immediate Motions and Revelations be tried and examined by the Word; because the Word is given us for this End, to be our Test and Standard of Truth. The Bereans, upon this Account, *were more noble than those of Thessalonica*, in that they received the Word with all Readiness of Mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those Things were so. Even Paul's Words, though he was an authorized and infallible Apostle of Christ's, are here put to the Touch-stone of the Word. Many false Prophets may go out, and deceive many, and speak great swelling Words of Vanity; but though an Angel out of Heaven should preach any other Thing than what is in the written Word, we ought not to receive his Doctrine. So that the written Word must be much studied by us; and by it must we try all Motions, all Doctrines, all Inspirations, all Revelations, and all Manifestations.

3. MUCH more should they beware of thinking that the Dictates of their Conscience oblige them, so that always they must of Necessity follow the same. Conscience, being God's Deputy in the Soul, is to be followed no further than it speaketh for GOD, and according to Truth. An erring Conscience, though it bind so far, that he who doth contrary to the Dictates thereof sinneth against GOD; yet it doth not oblige us to believe and do what it asserteth to be Truth and Duty. It will not then be enough for them to say, My Conscience speaketh so, and instructeth me so: For that Light may be Darkness, and Error and Delusion, and so no Rule for them to walk by. *To the Law and to*

the Testimony: And, if their Conscience, or Light within them, *speake not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them,* Isaiah-viii. 20. I grant, as I said, they cannot without Sin counteract the Dictates even of an erring Conscience; because they know not better, but that these Dictates are according to Truth: And thus an erring Conscience is a very dangerous Thing, and bringeth People under a very sad Dilemma, that, whether they follow it or not, they sin: And there is no other Remedy here, but to lay by the erring Conscience, and get a Conscience rightly informed by the Word; putting it in *Chriffs* Hand, to be better informed, that so it may do its Office better. This then should be especially guarded against; for, if once they lay down this for a Principle, that whatever their Conscience, or inward Light, dictate must be followed, there is no Delusion, how false, how abominable soever it be, but they may be drawn away with; and so the Rule that they will walk by, be nothing, in Effect, but the Spirit of Lies and Delusion, and the Motions and Dictates of him who is the Father of Lyes, that is, the Devil.

4. SUCH as pretend so much to walk by Conscience, should take Heed that they take not that for the Dictate of Conscience, which really is but the Dictate of their own Humours, Inclinations, pre-occupied Minds, and biassed Wills. When Conscience speaketh, it groundeth on the Authority of GOD, whether truly or falsely, and proposeth such a Thing to be done, or to be refrained from, merely because GOD commandeth that, and forbiddeth this, though sometimes it mistaketh: But, though Mens Humours, Inclinations, pre-occupied Judgments and Wills, may pretend GOD's Authority for what they say; yet really some selfish End
lieth

lieth at the Bottom, and is the chief Spring of that Motion. And also the Dictates of Humour and biassed Wills are usually more violent than the Dictates of Conscience; for, wanting the Authority of God to back their Assertions, they make up that with an Addition of a preternatural Force. Hence such as are purely led by Conscience, are pliable, humble, and ready to hear and receive Information; whereas others are headstrong, unwilling to receive Instruction, or to hear any Thing contrary to their Minds, lest their Conscience, receiving more Light, speak with a higher Voice against their Inclinations and former Ways.

5. THEY should labour for much Self-denial and Sincerity, and to be free from the Snares of selfish Ends, as a Name and Applause; for that will be like a Gift, that blindeth the Eyes of the Wise. Love to carry on a Party, or a Design to be seen and accounted Somebody, to maintain their Credit and Reputation, and the like, will prove very dangerous in this Case: For these may carry the Soul away to embrace one Error after another, and one Error to strengthen and confirm another, that it is hard to know where or when they shall stand; and these By-respects may so drive the Soul forward, that he shall neither hear the Voice of Conscience within, nor any Instruction from without.

6. THEY should study the Word of Truth, without Prejudice, or any sinful Pre-engagement, lest they be made thereby to wiredraw and wrest the Word, to their own Destruction. It is a dangerous Thing to study the Word with a prejudicate Opinion, and to bow the Word, and make it speak what we would have it speak, for the Confirmation of our Sentiments: For this is but to mock God and his, and to say, Let his Law speak what it will,

will, I will maintain this Opinion; and so make the Word speak as we would have it, or else lay it by. This is to walk by some other Rule than the Word, and make the Word serve our Lusts, and confirm our Errors; than which a greater Indignity cannot be done to the Spirit of Truth, speaking in the Word.

7. IN reading and studying the Word, there should be much Dependence on the Spirit for Light; waiting for Clearness from Him, whom *Christ* hath promised to lead us into all Truth: An earnest Wrestling with Him for his Assistance, enlightening the Mind to understand the Truth, and inclining the Soul to a ready embracing it.

8. THOUGH one Place of Scripture be enough to confirm any Truth, and Ground sufficient for us to believe what is there said; yet in such a Time of abounding Errors, and when many are going abroad speaking perverse Things, it were spiritual Wisdom to be comparing Scripture with Scripture, and not to be lightly embracing whatever may seem probable, and fairly deducible from some one Passage of Scripture: For this is certain, whatever contradicteth other clear and manifest Testimonies of Scripture cannot be true, however a Sophister may make it seem to flow out of such or such a Passage of Scripture. The Testimony of the Spirit is uniform, and free from Contradictions: And therefore we must see if such an Assertion, that some would draw from such a Passage, agree with other plain Passages; and, if not, be sure that is not the Meaning of the Place. Especially they should beware of expounding clear Scriptures by such as are more dark and mysterious: It is always safer to explain darker Passages by such as are more clear.

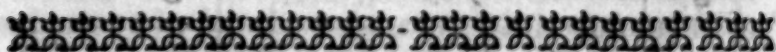
9. LET them guard against nauseating old and solid Truths, and seeking after something new, having itching Ears after new Doctrines, yea, or new Modes and Dresses of old Truth: For this savoureth of a Spirit of Levity and Inconstancy, which is dangerous.

10. ESPECIALLY they should hold the Ground-work fast, Faith in *Christ*. It were good, in such a Time of erring from the Way of Truth, to be grasping *Christ* faster, and cleaving to Him by Faith, and living by Faith in Him. This is to hold the Foundation fast; and then let the Tempest of Error blow as it will, they will ride at a sure Anchor, and be safe, because fixed upon the Rock of Ages. And further, living near *Christ*, in such a dangerous Day, would be a noble Preservative from the Infections of Error: The Soul that is dwelling in *Christ*, cleaving to Him daily by Faith, and acting Love on Him, dwells in Light, and will discover Error sooner than another, because living under the Rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

11. THEY should guard against Pride and Self-conceit, as thinking they are wise enough, and need not take a Lesson of any. It were good for his People in such a Day to be meek and humble, willing to learn of any Person, how mean soever. The LORD may bless a Word spoken by a private Person, when He will not bless the Word spoken by a Minister: For his Blessings are free, and it is not good to despise any Mean. *Apollos*, though instructed in the Way of the LORD, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in Spirit, and teaching diligently the Things of the LORD; yet was content to learn of *Aquila*, and of his Wife *Priscilla*, when they expounded unto him the Ways of GOD more perfectly.

12. IN such a Time, it is not unsafe to look to such as have been eminent in the Ways of GOD; for it is probable, they may know much of the Mind of GOD in those questioned Matters: Tho' we should call no Man Rabbi, as hanging our Faith absolutely on him; yet in such a Time of prevailing Error, some Respect should be had to such as have found Grace of the LORD, to be faithful in Times of Trial, and have maintained Truth in Times of Persecution, and with Singleness of Heart followed the LORD.

13. THEY should also at such a Time be much in the sincere Practice of uncontroverted Duties, and in putting uncontroverted and unquestioned Truths into Practice; and this may prove a notable Mean to keep them right: For then are they in GOD's Way; and so the Devil hath not that Advantage of them, that he hath of others, who are out of the Way of Duty.



CHAP. XV.

How CHRIST *is* the Life.

THIS, as the former, may be taken, as relating both to such as are yet in the State of Nature, and to such as are in the State of Grace; and so may be considered three Ways, 1. That we stand in Need of his Help, as being *the Life*. 2. That no other Way can get that Supply of Life, which we stand in Need of; for He

He only is *the Life*. 3. That this Help is to be had in Him fully and compleatly.

THE Words in Reference to such as are in Nature, point out these three Truths:

First, THAT all of us by Nature are dead, standing in Need of Quickning: This is pre-supposed, while He is said to be *the Life*; and that both legally and really. Legally, being under the Sentence of Death for *Adam's* Transgression, *Rom. v. 15.* and for that original Corruption of Heart we have: And really, the Sentence of the Law being in Part executed, and that both as to the Body, and as to the Soul. As to the Body, it is now subject to Death, and all the Forerunners thereof, such as Weakness, Pain, Sickness, Fears, Torment, Trouble, Weariness, yea, and in Hazard of the second Death for ever. As to the Soul, it also is many Ways dead, both first in a Way that is purely penal, and next in a Way that is also sinful; and both Ways, as to what is present, and to what is future: For, as to that which is penal and present, it is, (1.) Separated from GOD and his Favour: (2.) Is under his Curse and Wrath: Whence it cometh to pass, that *by Nature we are Children of Wrath, Servants of Satan, 2 Tim. ii. 26.* The Consequence of which is sad and heavy; for hence it is that we cannot please GOD, do what we will: 'Till we be brought out of that State, our ordinary and civil Actions, even plowing the Ground, is Sin, *Prov. xxi. 4.* Yea, our religious Actions, whether natural or instituted, are Abomination; even our Sacrifices and Prayers; yea, and all our Thoughts and Purposes, *Prov. xv. 26.* and likewise our Ways, *Prov. xv. 9.* As to what is penal and future, it is obnoxious to that everlasting Excommunication from the Presence of the LORD, and from the Glory
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of his Power, and to the Torments of Hell for ever. As to what is not only penal, but also sinful, the Soul here is under the Stroke of Darknes in the Understanding, Perverseness and Rebelliousness in the Will, Irregularity and Disorder in the Affections, whereby the Soul is unfit for any Thing that is good, and prone to every Thing that is evil, *Rom. iii. 10, 20. Eph. iii. 1, 2, 3. Rom. v. 6. and viii. 7, 8.* Whence proceed all our actual Transgressions. And moreover, sometimes the Soul is given up to a reprobate Mind, to strong Delusion, to Hardness of Heart, Horror of Conscience, to vile Affections, and the like spiritual Plagues; which, though the LORD inflict on some only, yet all are obnoxious to the same, and can expect no less, if the LORD should enter with them into Judgment. And finally, as to what is future of this Kind, they are, being Fuel for *To-het*, obnoxious to that malignant, sinful, blasphemous and desperate Rebellion against GOD, in Hell for evermore.

O how lamentable, upon this Consideration, must the Condition of such be, as are yet in the State of Nature! Oh if it were but seen and felt! But alas, there is this Addition to all, that People know not this; they consider it not, they believe it not, they feel it not, they see it not: And hence it cometh to pass, that,

1. THEY cannot bewail and lament their Condition, nor be humbled for it.

2. THEY cannot, will not seek after a Remedy: For the Whole will not trouble themselves to seek after a Physician.

AND sure, upon this Account, their Case calleth for Compassion from all that know what a dreadful Thing

Thing it is to be in such a Condition, and should stir up all to pray for them, and to do all they can to help them out of that State of Sin and Misery.

SHOULD not the Thoughts and Consideration of this put us all to try and search if *we be translated from Death to Life*, and delivered out of that dreadful State, and made *Partakers of the first Resurrection*? It not being my Purpose to handle this Point at large, I shall only desire every one to examine,

1. WHETHER or not the Voice of *Christ*, which quickneth the Dead, hath been heard and welcomed in their Soul?

2. WHETHER or not there be a thorough Change wrought in the Soul, a Change in the whole Man, so as all Things are become new?

3. WHETHER or not there be a Principle of Life within, and they be led by the Spirit?

Secondly, WE learn hence, that without *Christ* there is no imaginable Way of Delivery out of this natural State of Death. *No other Name is given under Heaven whereby we can be saved*, Acts iv. 12. And Angels can make no Help here, nor can any of us deliver another: Nor is there any Thing we can do for ourselves, that will avail here; all our Prayers, Tears, Whippings, Fastings, Vows, Alms-deeds, Purposes, Promises, Resolutions, Abstinence from some Evils, outward Amendments, good Morality, outward Religiuosness, yea, and if it were possible, our keeping of the whole Law, will not help us out of this Pit. And we may weary ourselves in such Exercises in vain; for they will prove but *badly Exercises that profit little*. And when in this Way we have spent all our Time,
Spirits,

Spirits and Labour, we shall at length see, and say, that *we have spent our Money for that which is not Bread.*

THIS should put all of us to try what it is which we lean to for Life; and what it is, the Consideration whereof giveth us Peace, when the Thoughts of Death, Judgment, Hell, and the Wrath of GOD, come upon us, and trouble us: For if it be any Thing beside *Christ* that our Soul leaneth to, and that we are comforted by, and found our Hopes upon, we shall meet with a lamentable, for ever lamentable Disappointment. Be sure then, that our Hearts renounce all other Ways out of this Death, beside *JESUS the Resurrection and the Life*; else it will not be well with us.

Thirdly, WE see here, that Delivery out of this State of Death is only had by *Christ*; for He alone is *the Life*, and the Life that is in Him is suitable and excellent. Hence He is called *the Bread of Life, the Resurrection and the Life, the Water of Life, the Tree of Life, the Prince of Life, our Life, the Word of Life, and Life itself.*

AND as He is a suitable and excellent Life, so is He an all-sufficient and perfect Life, able every Way to help us, and to deliver us from all the Parts of our Death: For,

1. HE delivereth from the Sentence of the Law, undergoing the Curse of the Law, and becoming a Curse for us.

2. HE taketh away the Curse and Sting of all temporal Plagues, yea, and of Death itself, causing *all to work together for Good to such as love Him.* He hath killed him that had the Power of Death, that
is,

is, the Devil: And thro' Him the Sting of Death, which is Sin, is taken away.

3. He reconcileth to God, taking away that Distance and Enmity, and so He is our Peace and Peace-maker, purchasing Access for us to the Father.

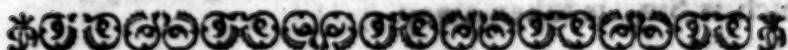
4. He also delivereth from the Power of Sin and Corruption.

5. AND from all those spiritual Strokes, such as Blindness, Hardness of Heart; for He is our Light, and hath procured a new Heart for us, even an Heart of Flesh.

6. So delivereth He from Hell-Fire, having satisfied Justice, and brought Life and Immortality to Light. And He giveth Life eternal.

OH! it is sad that *Christ* is so little made Use of, and that so many forsake the Fountain of living Waters, and dig to themselves broken Cisterns that can hold no Water.

OH! if the Consideration of this could move such, as never found any Change in themselves, to run to and make Use of *Jesus Christ* for Life!



C H A P. XVI.

Some general Uses.

BEFORE we come to speak of particular Cases, wherein Believers are to make Use of *Christ* as the Life, we shall first propose some Deductions from what hath been spoken. And,

First, THE Faith of those Things which have been mentioned would be of great Use and Advantage to Believers: And therefore they should study to have this Truth fixed on their Hearts, and a deep Impression thereof on their Spirits, to the End that,

1. BE their Condition what it will, they might be kept from Despair, from giving over their Case as hopeless. The Faith of *Christ's* being Life, and the Life, would keep the Soul in Hope, and cause it to say, how dead soever my Case be, yet Life can help me, and He, who is *the Resurrection and the Life*, can recover me.

2. YEA, be their Case what it will, they would have here some Encouragement, to go to Him with their dead Soul, and to look to Him for Help, seeing He is the Life, as Mediator, to the End He might enliven his dead fainting Members.

3. THEY might be freed from many Scruples and Objections. This one Truth believed would clear the Way so, that such Things, as would have

have been Impediments and Objections before, shall be rolled out of the Way : Such as are the Objections taken from their own Worthlessness, their long Continuance in that dead Condition, and the like.

4. THEY might hereby be freed from that dreadful Plague and Evil of Jealousy, whereby the Soul is oft kept back from coming to *Christ* : For they fear He will not make them welcome ; they doubt of his Love and Tenderneſs, and question his Compaſſion ; yea, their Jealousy maketh them to doubt of his Faithfulneſs. So that the Faith of this Truth would cure this Jealousy, and deliver the Soul therefrom, and open a Way for the Soul to come forward with Boldneſs and Confidence.

5. THEY might alſo be hereby helped to wait with Patience, and to be ſtill and quiet under the LORD's various Diſpenſations ; ſo as they would not fret nor repine againſt Him, knowing that He would prove Himſelf to be Life, even the Life, in his own good Time ; ſo that the Soul would patiently wait at his Door, 'till He were pleaſed to look out, and with his Look convey Life.

6. THEY might be preſerved hereby from looking out to, or expecting any Help from, any other : Knowing that He alone is the Life ; and ſo, that Help can no where elſe be had. The Faith of this Truth would guard from many Ways which the Soul in a Time of Strait is ready to run to for Relief : For hereby would it ſee, that neither Inſtruments, nor Means, nor outward Adminiſtrations, nor any Thing of that Kind, can quicken their dead Soul ; and that He, and He alone, muſt breathe Life into them, as at firſt, ſo now again.

Secondly, MAY we not see and observe here great Matter of Admiration at the Goodness and rich Bounty of God towards his People, who hath found out such a sure, safe and satisfying Way, whereby He becometh all Things to his People which they stand in Need of; and that notwithstanding,

1. THAT we are most unworthy of any such Grace at his Hands.

2. THAT we too oft are desirous of other Gueſſes in our Hearts beside Him. O how much Corruption, Sin and Death lodge we within our Souls? And how more desirous are we oft-times of Death than of Life?

3. THAT we little improve the noble Advantages for Life which we have granted unto us; yea, many a Time we abuse them: And this He did foresee, and yet notwithstanding would condescend thus unto us.

BUT not for our Sakes hath He done this, but for his own Name's Sake: For noble and holy Ends hath He resolved upon this Course; as

(1.) THAT He might be *All and in All*, and they Nothing. That He alone might *fill All in All*, and they be empty and nothing without Him.

(2.) THAT He might wear the Glory of all: *For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all Things*, and that no Man might share therein.

(3.) THAT Man might be his everlasting Debtor, and cast down, in Testimony thereof, his Crown at his Feet, who sitteth on the Throne, as those did, *Rev. iv. 10.* and might cry out with these

these same Elders, *Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; and with those, Chap. v. 12. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing.*

(4.) THAT Man's Mouth might be stopt for ever, and all Boasting excluded: For Man is a proud Creature, and ready to boast of that which is Nothing and Vanity. Now, GOD hath chosen this Way of the Covenant of Grace, that Man might boast no more: *Where is Boasting then? It is excluded. By what Law? By the Law of Works? Nay, but by the Law of Faith.*

(5.) THAT Believers might have strong Consolation, notwithstanding all the Opposition of Enemies without and within, when they see that now their *Life is hid with Christ in GOD, Col. iii. 3.* And that their Life is in their Head: They will not fear so much Devils and Men without, nor their own dead and corrupt Hearts within.

Thirdly, How inexcusable must all such be,

1. WHO will not lay Hold on this Life, on *Jesus* who is *the Life*, sure Life, yea, everlasting Life?

2. WHO seek Life any other Way than by and thro' Him, who is *the Life*?

3. WHO oppose this Way of Life, and not only reject the Offers of it, but prove Enemies to it, and to all that carry it or preach it?

Fourthly, HERE is strong Encouragement to all, that would be at Heaven, to enter into this Gospel-Way. Such need not fear that their Salvation shall not be effected: Let *Satan* and all their Adversaries do what they can, all that persevere in this Way shall live; for the Way itself is Life, and nothing but Life. So that here all Objections are obviated: Life can answer all. If the Believer fear that he shall never win thorough Difficulties, he shall die by the Way, or, by fainting, dishonour the Profession, and at length fall off, or despair and give over all Hope; here is that which may answer and obviate all: Life can quicken; and who can perish in the Way, which is the Way of Life, yea, which is Life itself, yea, the Life, in a singular and eminent Manner?

Fifthly, HERE is Ground of Reproof even of Believers, who, tho' they have come to *Christ*, yet do not live in Him as they ought, do not walk in Him with that Liveliness and Activity which is called for; but

1. LEAN too much to their own Understanding, Gifts or Graces; and think thereby to ride out Storms, and to wade thorough Difficulties: Whileas, if He who is the Life do not breathe upon us, all that will fail us in the Day of Trial; our Understanding and Gifts may dry up, and our Graces may wither and decay, and go backward.

2. REST too much on Duties, when they should in them go to Him who is the Life; for only in Him is Life to be had; and Him should they seek to in the Ordinances, that they might have Life from him in those outward Duties. And this appeareth in their Way of going about Duties, without that Dependence

Dependence on Him, and single eyeing of Him, which is called for; as also by their fretting and repining when Duties do not their Business, as if Life lay all in Duties; and concluding all will be right because they get Duties somewhat tolerably performed, and on the contrary disponding when Duties fall heavy on them: All which clearly evinceth, that they lay too much Weight on Duties; whereas it would be otherwise with them, if they were purely depending on *Christ*, and looking for all from Him.

Sixthly, THIS may point to Believers several Duties to which they are called: We shall name some few.

1. THAT they should rejoice and be comforted in the Thoughts of this, that they have such a compleat Mediator, one that is thoroughly furnished, and made all Things for them; not only *the Way*, and *the Truth*, but *the Life* also.

2. THE Thoughts of this should also stir up to wondering at the Wisdom, Graciousness, and Goodness of GOD; and to Thankfulness for providing such an all-sufficient Way for them.

3. THIS should also encourage them under all Temptations, Faintings, and Deadness that they fall into, that there is One, who is *the Life*; and that He, whom their Soul hath chosen, is *the Life*, and so fully able to enliven them.

4. THIS should teach them Humility, and not to be proud of any Thing they have or do: For it is He, who is *the Life*, who keepeth them in Life, and helpeth them to any Duty; yea, that worketh all in them.

5. AND

5. AND mainly, they should here read their Obligation, to improve this Advantage, and to draw Life out of this Fountain, and so live by this Life, act and do all in and thro' this Life, and so be quickned by this Life in all their Deadness.



C H A P. XVII.

How Christ is to be made Use of for Life, in Case of Heartlessness and Fainting thro' Discouragements.

TH E R E is a Distemper which Believers are subject to, and that is fainting thro' manifold Discouragements, which makes them so heartless, that they can do nothing. The Question is, How such a Soul shall make Use of *Christ*, to the End it may be freed from that Fainting, and win over those Discouragements? For Satisfaction to which, we shall,

1. NAME some of those Discouragements which occasion it.
2. SHEW what *Christ* hath done to remove all those Discouragements.
3. How the Soul should make Use of *Christ* for Life in this Case. And,
4. ADD a few Words of Caution.

As to the *first*, There are several Things which may occasion this Distemper: We shall name these few;

1. THE Sense of a continually stirring Body of Death, and that notwithstanding Means used to bear it down and kill it. This is very discouraging; to be still fighting, and yet getting no Ease; to have to do with an Enemy that abides always strong, fight and oppose as we will. And this many Times affecteth the Hearts of God's Children, and causeth them to faint.

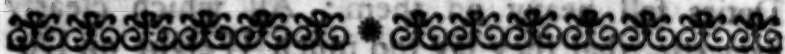
2. IT may be the Case of some, that they are assaulted with strange Temptations of *Satan*, Bussittings that are not usual. This made *Paul* cry out thrice, 2 *Cor.* xii. and, if the LORD had not told him that his Grace was sufficient for him, what would He have done? Hence some cry out, Was there ever any so tempted, so assaulted with the Devil, as I am? Sure, this Dispensation cannot but be much afflicting, fadning and discouraging.

3. THE Sense of the real Weakness of Grace under lively Means, notwithstanding their serious and earnest Desires and Endeavours after Growth in Grace, cannot but disquiet and discourage them: For they may readily conclude, that all their Pains and Labour shall be in vain.

4. THE Want of Joy and Comfort is another fainting and discouraging Dispensation; as the Feeling of these is a most encouraging Thing, which made *David* so earnestly cry for it, *Pf.* li. 8, 12.

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5. THE

5. THE Want of Liberty in their Addresses to God, is another Thing which causeth Sorrow and Fainting. They go to pray, but their Tongue cleaveth to the Roof of their Mouth; they are straitned, and cannot get their Hearts vented.

6. OUTWARD Persecution that attendeth the Way of Godliness, and Afflictions that accompany such as live godly, are another discouraging Thing, both to them who are under Afflictions, and to others who hear it and see it: Wherefore the Apostle desireth earnestly, that the *Ephesians* should not faint at his Tribulation, Chap. iii. 13.

As to the *second* Thing, *Christ* is Life to the Believer in this Case, in having done that which in Reason may support under all these Discouragements, and having done so much for removing these, yea, and carrying them over them all.

1. As for the Body of Death. Let it stir in the Believer as far as it will or can, all that Struggling is but like the Struggling of a Man in the Pangs of Death; for our *our old Man is crucified with Christ*, *Rom. vi. 6.* and the Believer is dead to Sin. But of this I spoke above.

2. As to Satan's Troubling. Through *Christ* also he is a vanquished Enemy: He hath overcome him that had the Power of Death, even the Devil, *Heb. ii. 14.*

3. As for Weakness of Grace, that is no Ground of Discouragement, so long as He liveth, who can make the *Lame to leap as an Hart*, and can make *Waters break out in the Wilderness, and Streams in the Desert*, *Isa. xxxv.* So that such as wait upon the LORD shall renew their Strength, and they shall mount

mount up with Wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. So that they need not faint upon this Account, nor be discouraged, for He will quicken them in the Way, Ps. cxix. 37.

4. As for the Want of Joy and Comfort, He hath promised to send the Comforter in his own good Time, *John* xiv. 26. & 15. 26. *As one whom his Mother comforteth, so will He comfort His, Isa.* lxvi. 13. Joy and Gladness is promised in the Covenant, *Jer.* xxxi. 13. But further, Tho' He keep back those Influences of Joy and Comfort, He supporteth another Way. The Hope of Heaven may bear up the Heart under all this Want: For there shall the Soul have *Fulness of Joy, and Pleasure for evermore.*

5. As to that Want of Liberty in Prayer, He helpeth that also: For *He maketh the Dumb to sing, and maketh the Tongue of the Stammerers to be ready to speak elegantly.* He can enlarge the Heart, and help the Soul to pour out its Heart before God.

6. As to outward Persecution, He can easily take that Discouragement away, by giving the Hundred-fold with it, by supporting under it, and bringing safe through. When his Presence is with them through Fire and Water, what can trouble them? And, when He maketh their Consolations abound, what can Discourage them? Have not His sung in the very Fires, and rejoiced in all their Afflictions? *The resting of the Spirit of God and of Glory, which Peter speaketh of, is comfortable enough.*

HE having taken the Sting of all, even of Death, away, by taking away Sin, and purchased the Blessing and Love of the Father, having made Reconciliation thro' his Blood, all those Dispensations flow from Love, even such as seem sharpest; so that there is no Cause here of Fainting, or of being so discouraged, as to give over the Matter. But, for Help in this Case, there should be an using of *Jesus*, as *the Life*: And that is,

THE *third* Thing which we shall speak to, *viz*, How the Soul should make Use of *Christ*, as *the Life*, that it may be delivered from this Fainting, occasioned thro' manifold Discouragements?

1. THEY should mind the Covenant of Grace, wherein all Things are contrived and laid down, so as that the Believer may have abundant Comfort in all Cases; and wherein there is enough to take away all Cause of Fainting and Discouragement:

2. THEY should remember how richly *Christ* is furnished with all Qualifications suiting even that Case wherein they are like to be overwhelmed. And, could we but believe these three Things, we might be kept up under all Discouragements; (1) That *Christ* is a compassionate tender-hearted Mediator, having Bowels more tender than the Bowels of any Mother; so that *He will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax*. He had Compassion on the very Bodies of the Multitude that followed Him, and would not let them go away fasting, lest they should faint in the Way; and, will He not have Compassion on the Souls of his Followers, when like to faint thro' spiritual Discouragements? (2.)

That

That He hath Power and Authority to command all Things that can serve to carry on a poor Believer; for *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given to Him, all Things are made subject to Him.* (3.)

That He hath a great Readiness and Willingness, to help his Followers in their Necessities. Sure, were these three firmly believed, we could not faint, having *Christ*, who is tender and loving, and willing to help, and withall able to do what He will, to look to, and to run to, for Supply.

3. WE should take up *Christ* under all his Heart-strengthening and Soul-comforting Relations, as a tender Brother, a careful Shepherd, a Fellow-feeling High Priest, a loving Husband, a sympathizing Head, a Life-communicating Root, an all-sufficient King; any one of which is enough to bear up the Head, and comfort the Heart of a drooping, discouraged and fainting Soul; much more may all of them yield strong Consolation, to support and revive a Soul staggering and fainting thro' Discouragement. Oh if we would but rightly improve and dwell upon the Thoughts of these comforting and Heart-quickning Relations! Our Hearts would not fail us so much as they do.

4. WE should eye Him as now in Glory, who, as Head and Captain of our Salvation, hath wrestled through, and overcome all Difficulties and Discouragements that were in his Way, and in the Behalf of all Believers, that are his Followers, and Members of his Body, is now possessed of Glory; and thence draw an Heart-comforting, and Soul-strengthening Conclusion, thus: Is He entered into Glory as Head? Then such a poor faint-hearted, Heart-broken, discouraged Worm, as I am, may at length come there, especially since He said,
VOL. XXXVI. O that,

that, seeing He liveth, we shall live also, *John*
xiv. 19.

5. WE should remember how *Christ*, who was always heard of his Father, did supplicate for this, as Mediator and Intercessor for his People, saying, *Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.* May not the poor faint-hearted Believer, that is looking to *Jesus*, draw an Heart-reviving Conclusion out of this, and say, Tho' my Prayers be shut out, and, when I cry for Relief under my Discouragement, I get no Hearing; but, on the contrary, my Discouragements grow, and my Heart fainteth the more; yet *Christ* always was heard, and the Father will not say Him nay: Why then may I not lift up my Head in Hope, and sing in the Hope of the Glory of God, in the Midst of all my Discouragements?

6. By Faith we should cast all our Discouragements, Intanglements and Difficulties, as Burdens too heavy for us, on *Christ*, and leave them there with Him, who only can remove them; and withal resolve never to give over, but go forward in his Strength, and thus become daily stronger and stronger in Resolutions, Purposes, Desires and Endeavours, when we can do no more.

8. WE should look to *Jesus*, the Author and Finisher of Faith, as a Copy of Courage, who, for the Joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and endured Contradiction of Sinners against Himself, *Heb. xii. 2, 3.* and this may prove a Means to keep us from wearying and fainting in our Minds.

Now,

Now, for the *last* Particular, the Words of Caution, Take these;

1. **THEY** should lay their Resolution to meet with Discouragements: For few or none ever went to Heaven, but they had many a Storm in their Face; and they must not think to have a Way paved for themselves alone.

2. **THEY** should not pore too much, or dwell too long upon the Thoughts of those Discouragements: For that is *Satan's* Advantage, and tendeth to weaken them. It were better to be looking beyond them, as *Christ* did, when He had the Cross and the Shame to wrestle with, He looked to the Joy that was set before Him: And that made Him endure the Cross, and despise the Shame: And as *Moses* did, when he had Afflictions and the Wrath of the King to wrestle against, He had Respect unto the Recompence of the Reward, and so he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

3. **THEY** should remember, that as *Christ* hath tender Bowels, and is full of Compassion, and is both ready and able to help them; so is He wise, and knoweth how to let out his Mercies best. He is not like a foolish affectionate Mother, that would hazard the Life of the Child, before she put the Child to any Pain. He seeth what is best for his own Glory, and for their Good, here and hereafter; and that He will do with much Tenderness and Readiness.

4. **THEY** should look upon it as no mean Mercy, if, notwithstanding of all the Discouragements and Storms that blow in their Face, they are helped to keep their Face up the Hill, and are fixed in this Resolution, never to turn their Back upon the

Way of GOD, but to continue creeping forward as they may, whatever Storms they meet with: Yea, upon this Account, ought they heartily to bless his Name, and to rejoice; for *their Hearts shall live that seek Him.*

5. THEY should remember, for their Encouragement, that as many have been helped through all Discouragements, and have been brought Home at length; so may they be brought through all those Storms which now they wrestle with. It is the Glory of the Mediator to bring his broken, torn and sinking Vessels safe to Shore.

Now I come to a *third* Case, and that is,



C H A P. XVIII.

How shall one make Use of CHRIST, as the Life, when wrestling with an angry GOD because of Sin?

THAT we may give some Satisfaction to this Question, we shall,

1. SHEW what are the Ingredients in this Case, or what use to concur in this Distemper.

2. SHEW some Reasons why the LORD is pleased to dispense thus with his People.

3. SHEW

the Truth, and the Life. 161

3. SHEW how *Christ* is Life to the Soul in this Case.

4. SHEW the Believer's Duty for a Recovery : And,

5. ADD a Word or two of Caution.

As to the *first*, There may be these Parts of, or Ingredients in, this Distemper :

1. GOD presenting their Sins unto their View, so as they shall cry out, *Our Sin is ever before us* : And say, as it is *Pf. xc. 8. Thou hast set our Iniquities before Thee, our secret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance* : And so cause them to see the LORD contending for Sin, as the Church did, *Isa. lix. We roar all like Bears, and mourn sore like Doves ; We look for Judgment, but there is none ; for Salvation, but it is far from us : For our Transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our Sins testify against us : For our Transgressions are with us ; and as for our Iniquities, we know them.*

2. YEA, GOD may bring upon them the Iniquities of their Youth, and so suffer Conscience to charge them with their old Sins, formerly repented of and pardoned : And this is more terrible.

3. AND, as *Job* speaketh, Chap. xv. 17. GOD may seem to be sealing up all their Sins in a Bag, that none of them may be lost or fall by, without being taken Notice of ; as it were gathering them together in a Heap.

4. HE may pursue sore with Signs of Wrath and Displeasure, because of those Sins ; as we see in
Q 3 David,

David, and in several others of his People chastened of the LORD because of their Transgressions.

5. FURTHER, the LORD may deprive them of all their former Joy and Comfort; which made *David* cry out, *Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation.*

6. AND, which is yet more terrible, write their Sin upon their Judgment; as when He caused the Sword and Whoredom to follow *David's* House.

AND this the LORD thinketh good to do (that we may speak a Word to the *second* Particular) for these and the like Reasons;

1. To discover to them, and to all the World, how just, holy and righteous a GOD He is, that cannot approve of or bear with Sin even in his own Children.

2. To make all fear and tremble before this great and holy GOD, who is terrible in his Judgments, even when they come from a Father's Hand, that is not pursuing in pure Anger, but chastening in Love. Sure, all must think, that his Dispensations with the Wicked will be much more fearful.

3. To press Believers more earnestly in to *Christ*, that they may get a new Extract of their Pardon, and their Souls washed in the Blood of *Jesus*.

4. To teach them to walk more circumspectly afterward, and to guard more watchfully against *Satan's* Temptations, and to employ *Christ* more as their Strength, Light and Guide.

5. To

5. To give a fresh Proof of his wonderful Mercy, Grace, Love and Compassion, upholding the Soul in the mean Time, and at length pardoning them, and speaking Peace to their Souls through the Blood of *Jesus*.

BUT, as to the *third* Particular, we may look on *Christ*, as the Life to the Soul in this Case, upon these Accounts;

1. HE hath satisfied Justice, and so hath borne the pure Wrath of GOD due for our Sins: He hath trodden the Wine-press alone, *Isa. lxxiii. 3.* He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Sins, *Isa. liii. 5, 10.*

2. YEA, He hath procured that Mercy and Love shall accompany all those sharp Dispensations, and that they shall flow from Mercy.

3. AND sometimes He is pleased to let them see this clear Difference betwixt the Strokes they lie under, and the Judgments of pure Wrath; and this supporteth the Soul: For then He seeth, that those Dispensations, how sharp soever they be, shall work together for Good to him, and come from the Hand of a gracious and loving Father.

4. HE is a Prince, exalted to give Repentance and Remission of Sins to Israel, *Acts v. 31.* Yea, He hath procured such a Clause in the Covenant, which is well ordered in all Things and sure, that, upon their renewing of Faith and Repentance, their After-Sins shall be pardoned.

5. HE cleareth to them their Interest in the Covenant, and their Right to the Promises; and, thro'

thro' their closing with *Christ* by Faith, He raiseth up their Heart in Hope, and causeth them to expect Remission of their Sins, and turning away of the Displeasure in due Time: And this is a great Part of their Life.

6. BEING *the Author and Finisber of Faith*, and a Prince to give Repentance, He, by his Spirit, worketh up the Soul to a renewing of its Grasps of Himself by Faith, and to a running to the Death and Blood of *Christ* for Pardon and Washing; and worketh godly Sorrow in the Heart: Whereupon followeth Pardon.

7. HE helpeth also the Soul to a justifying of of GOD, and to a holy submissive Frame of Spirit, under that Dispensation; so that they are willing to bear the Indignation of the LORD, because they have sinned against Him, to wait for an Issue in GOD's own Time; and to kiss the Rod, and accept of the Punishment of their Sin.

8. WHEN He seeth it fit for his own Glory and their Advantage, He speaketh Peace to the Soul, and saith, *Son or Daughter, be of good Chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee*: And then is the Soul restored to Life.

As to the *fourth* Particular: The Soul that is wrestling with an angry GOD for Sin, and would make Use of *Christ* as the Life, should do these Things;

1. HE should look to *Christ*, as standing under GOD's Curse in our Room, and as satisfying Justice for all our Sins,

2. HE should eye the Covenant, wherein new Pardon is promised, upon the renewing of Faith and Repentance.

3. HE should eye *Christ* as the great LORD Dispensator of both Faith and Repentance, and hang on Him for both; and thus believe, that he may believe and repent; or lay his Soul open to Him, that He may work in him both Repentance and Faith.

4. HE should flee to the Blood of Sprinkling, that speaks better Things than the Blood of *Abel*.

5. HE should eye *Christ* as a Prince, to pardon and give Remission of Sins, and as exalted for this End; and fix his Eye upon Him, as now exalted in Glory for this End.

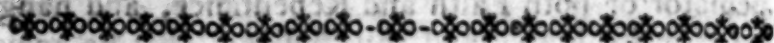
As for the Cautions which I promised to speak to, in the *last* Place, take these few:

1. Do not conclude there is no Pardon, because there is no Intimation thereof made to thy Soul as yet.

2. Do not conclude there is no Pardon, because the Rod that was inflicted for Sin is not yet taken off. GOD pardoned *David's* Sin, and did intimate the same to him by *Nathan*; and yet the Sword did not depart from his House 'till he died: GOD can forgive, and yet take Vengeance on their Inventions.

3. Do not think, that because thou hast once received *Christ*, that therefore, without any new Act of Faith on Him, or of Repentance towards GOD, thou shouldst immediately be pardoned of thy

thy Sins as soon as they are committed ; for the Gospel-Method must be followed, and it should satisfy us.



C H A P. XIX.

No Man cometh to the Father but by Me.

THIS, being added to the further Confirmation of what was formerly said, will point out to us several necessary Truths :
As,

First, THAT it is most necessary to be sound and clear in this fundamental Point, of coming to God only in and through *Christ* : For,

1. It is the whole Marrow of the Gospel.
2. It is the Hinge of all our Salvation : *Christ* is the chief Corner-stone,
3. THE only Ground of all true Peace and Comfort.
4. AN Error or a Mistake here is most dangerous ; hazarding, if not ruining all.
5. SATAN endeavours mainly against this, raiseth up Heresies, Errors and false Opinions, and prompteth some to vent perplexing Doubts and Objections.

6. OUR

6. OUR corrupt Hearts are most averse from it, and will close with any Way, how troublesome, how expensive and costly soever it may seem to be, rather than with this.

ALL which clear up this Necessity, and should teach us to make sure that we are in it, and to hold it fast, and to keep it pure in our Practice, without mixing any Thing with it.

Secondly, THAT it is no small Difficulty to get this Truth believed and practised, that through *Christ* alone we come to the Father. For,

1. NATURE will not teach this Way, it is far above Nature.

2. YEA, our natural Inclination is much against it, opposing it, and fighting against it.

3. THIS Way is altogether contrary to that high Esteem which naturally all of us have of ourselves.

4. YEA, there is nothing in us by Nature that will willingly comply with this Way; but, on the contrary, all is opposite thereunto.

5. AND therefore it is the Christian's first Lesson, to deny himself.

THE Consideration of which should humble us, and make us very jealous of our own Hearts, and of all those Courses which they are inclinable to and bent upon. And it should put us to try if ever we have overcome this Difficulty, and have now all our Hopes and Comforts founded on Him, and on nothing else; and in all our Approaches to
GOD

GOD, upon whatsoever Account, are leaning to Him, and resting on Him alone, expecting Access, Acceptance, and a Hearing, only in Him; and are quieted under all our Fears and Temptations with this, that *Christ* is our Way to the Father.

Thirdly, THAT even Believers have Need to have this Truth inculcated often: For,

1. SATAN is busy pulling them off this Ground, by all the Wiles and Temptations he can.

2. THEIR own Corruption within, and the evil Heart of Unbelief, is always opposing this Way, and drawing them off it.

3. THROUGH the Sleight of *Satan*, and the Power of Corruption, they are oft-times declining from this pure Gospel-Way.

4. THE Experience of Believers can tell, that, when they are at their best, it is a great Work and Exercise to them, to keep their Heart right in this Matter.

5. Is it not too often seen that they are under the spiritual Plague of Formality, which stealeth them off their Feet here?

How ought all to be convinced of this, and humbled under a Sense of it? And see also how necessary it is to be oft preaching on this Subject, and to be oft thinking upon and studying this fundamental Truth.

Fourthly, It should be a strong Motive and Incitement to us to make Use of *Christ* as the Way
to

to the Father, that no Man cometh to the Father but by Him: For this may be looked upon as an Argument, enforcing their using Him as the Way.

Fifthly, THAT in and through *Christ* alone we must come,

1. To the Knowledge of the Father: For no Man knoweth the Father but the Son; and He alone, who came out of the Bosom of the Father, revealeth Him.

2. To the Favour and Friendship of the Father; for He alone is our Peace, and in Him alone is the Father well pleased.

3. To the Kingdom of the Father here; for He only is the Door; and by his Spirit are we effectually called.

4. To the Kingdom of the Father above; for He alone hath opened that Door, and is entered into the holiest of all, as our Forerunner, and is gone to prepare a Place for us.

5. THROUGH Him alone must we address ourselves to the Father, in our Supplications, *John* xvi. 23. *Rev.* viii. 3. (in our Thanksgiving, *Rom.* i. 8. *Col.* iii. 17. and Praise, *Heb.* xiii. 15. *Eph.* iii. 21.

6. THROUGH Him alone have we Access, and an open Door to the Father, *Eph.* ii. 18. and iii. 21. *Heb.* iv. 16.

I SHALL only speak to one Case here, *viz.*

How should we make Use of *Christ*, in going to the Father, in Prayer and other Pieces of Worship?

For answering this Question, I shall lay down these Particulars;

1. THERE should be a lively Sense of the infinite Distance that is betwixt the great God, and us finite Creatures; and yet more, betwixt the holy GOD and us sinful Wretches.
2. THERE should be an eying of *Christ* as the great Peace-maker through his Death and Merits, having satisfied Justice, and reconciled Sinners to GOD; that so we may look on GOD now, no more as an Enemy, but as reconciled in *Jesus*.
3. THERE should be, sometimes at least, a more formal and explicit actual closing with *Christ* as ours, when we are going about such Duties: And always an implicit and virtual embracing of Him as our Mediator; or an habitual hanging upon Him, and leaning to Him, as our Mediator and Peace-maker.
4. THERE should be an eying of Him as our great High Priest, now living for ever to make Intercession for us, and to keep the Door of Heaven open to us: Upon which Account the Apostle presseth the *Hebrews* to come boldly to the Throne of Grace.
5. THERE should be a cleaving to Him even in Reference to this particular Act of Worship, and a laying Hold upon Him, to speak so, as our Master-Usher, to bring us by the Hand in to the Father, as conscious of our own Unworthiness.
6. THERE

6. THERE should be a Confidence leaning to Him in our approaching; and so we should approach in Him without Fear or Diffidence; and that notwithstanding we find not our Souls in such a Frame as we could wish.

THUS should we roll all the Difficulties that come in our Way, and all the Discouragements which we meet with, on Him, that He may take away the one and the other, and help us over the one and the other.

7. As we should take an Answer to all Objections from Him alone, and put Him to remove all Scruples and Difficulties, and strengthen ourselves against all Impediments and Discouragements, alone in and through Him; so there should be the bringing all our positive Encouragements from Him alone, and all our Hopes of speeding with the Father should be grounded upon Him.

8. WE should expect all our Welcome and Acceptance with the Father, only in and thro' *Christ*; and expect nothing for any Thing in ourselves, not for our Graces, good Frame, Preparation, or any Thing of that Kind. We should not found our Acceptance, or our Peace and Sanctification on ourselves, nor on any Thing we have or do; nor should we conclude our Exclusion or Want of Acceptance, because we do not apprehend our Frame so good as it ought to be; we should not found our Acceptance on the right Performance of Duties, for that is not *Christ*.

9. WE should look to Him for the Removal of all the Discouragements that *Satan* casts in our Way, while we are about this or that Piece of Worship, to put us back, or to cause us to ad-

vance slowly and faintingly; and, casting them all on Him, go forward in our Duty.

10. WE should look for all our Returns and Answers only in and thro' Him, and lay all the Weight of our Hopes and Expectation of a good Answer only on Him.

FOR Caution I would add a Word or two:

1. I DO not think that the Believer can explicitly and distinctly act all these Things whenever he is going to GOD, or can distinctly perceive all these several Acts: Nor have I specified them for this End; but to shew at some length how *Christ* is to be employed in those Acts of Worship which we are called to perform; and that because we oft-times think the simple naming of Him, and asking of Things for his Sake, is sufficient, tho' our Hearts lean more to some other Thing than to Him: And the conscientious Christian will find his Soul, when he is rightly going about the Duties of Worship, looking towards *Christ*, thus sometimes more distinctly and explicitly as to one Particular, and sometimes more as to another.

2. THO' the Believer cannot distinctly act Faith on *Christ*, all these Ways, when he is going about commanded Duties of Worship; yet he should be sure to have his Heart going out after *Christ*, as the only Ground of his Approaching to, and Acceptance with, the Father; and to have his Heart in such an habitual Frame of resting on *Christ*, that really there may be a relying upon Him all these Ways, tho' not distinctly discerned.

3. SOMETIMES

3. SOMETIMES the Believer will be called to be more distinct and explicit in looking to and resting upon *Christ* as to one Particular, and sometimes more as to another. When *Satan* is dissuading him to go to GOD, because He is an infinite Holy One, and himself is a Sinner; then he is called to act Faith on *Christ* as the Mediator, making Reconciliation betwixt GOD and Sinners: And when *Satan* casts up his Unworthiness and former Sins, to keep him back, or to discourage him; then he is called to lay Hold on *Christ* as the great High Priest and Advocate; and, casting that Discouragement on Him, to go forward. So likewise, when *Satan* is discouraging him in his Duty, by bringing before him his Sins, he should take this Course. And when, because of his sinful Way of Worshipping GOD and Calling upon Him, and and other Things, he is made to fear that all is in vain, that neither GOD regardeth him nor his Service, and that he shall not speed; then should he cast all the Burden of his Acceptance, and of obtaining what he asketh and desireth, on *Christ*, and quiet himself there; and so as to the rest. And hence appeareth the Usefulness of our branching out of this Matter.

4. IN all this, there must be an acting in the Strength of *Jesus*; a looking to *Christ*, and resting upon *Christ*, according to the present Case and Necessity, in *Christ*; that is, by his Strength and Grace communicated to us by his Spirit. Then do we worship GOD in the Spirit, and in the Newness of the Spirit, when all is done in and thro' *Jesus*.

End of Mr. BROWN's Works.

6 JY 64

End of Mr. Brown's Works.

AN
EXTRACT
FROM A
TREATISE
OF
Solid Virtue.

WRITTEN IN FRENCH.



TO

AN

EXTRACT

FROM A

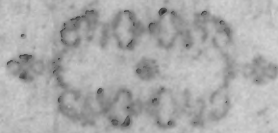
TREATISE

OF



Solidus.

both Written in FRENCH.



TO



TO THE

English READER.

THE First Part of this Treatise was translated some Years ago by one, now deceased, a very humble, pious, and virtuous Person, and who being convinced of the solid Foundations of Virtue, that he found in this Author, was thence excited to contribute all that was in his Power, that they might be communicated to these Kingdoms, It was published at *Amsterdam*, and now it has been thought fit to revise it and to publish both Parts together.

THE First Ten Letters, are adapted to the planting of Virtue; and all the rest to root out what may hinder its Increase. That Precept of Him, who is the Master and Example of Virtue is the Introduction, shewing what Virtues we must in the first Place embrace, and by what Means we must tend to them; which is by Obedience

To the English READER.

Obedience, and renouncing our own Wills, to the Meekness, Gentleness, and Humility of *Jesus Christ*. The Nature hereof is solidly explained; the Motives, Instruments, and Impediments produced; and the great Reasonableness of emptying ourselves demonstrated, in order to be possessed with the *Love of God*. In which Love consists the *Essence and Perfection of all Virtue, and all Good*: This alone is able to resist and overcome all the Temptations of *Satan*, how subtil soever, which are here treated of, as they respect either the Imagination, or the Intellect, or the Will.

THE *Secoud Part* contains the Means which are essentially necessary for the mortifying corrupt Nature, and arriving at Life: And the the Example of *Christ* is here set before us in the whole Process, which is symbolically presented by three Bridges. 1. That of *Forsaking the World*. 2. That of *Poverty of Spirit*. And, 3. That of *Renouncing our Wills*. Which last is most largely considered, and earnestly pressed as well in small as in great Things. And for the preventing of Mistakes, the Nature and Degrees of Virtue and Vice are clearly stated.

SOME will not look upon this Book, because it treats of Virtue; they say there is nothing there of *Jesus Christ*, and of Faith
in

To the English READER.

in him. What God has joined, Men ought not to put asunder, or to make a Contrariety between them. True Faith, and Faith in *Jesus Christ*, is certainly the Divine Principle of Solid Virtue. We are bidden to add to our Faith the other Divine Virtues; and are told, that Faith worketh by Love, and that the End of the Commandment is Charity, and that is the Essence of Virtue. Sure they who shall read this Treatise without an evil Eye, will see that by it we are still directed to *Jesus Christ*, that He only has merited our Pardon and Favour with God, that it is by his Grace alone we can do any Thing that is pleasing to God, that his Life and Doctrine is the only Rule we must follow, if we would attain true Virtue, and eternal Life; and it is his Holy Spirit that sheds the Divine Virtues into our Hearts.

Be pleased then, Friendly Reader, to peruse this Book with a sincere Resolution, by the Divine Grace, to put the Directions of it in Practice, so far as you find them conformable to the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*. I can wish you no greater Good, than that your Heart and Life be moulded into that Divine Frame. We are all travelling to Eternity, where we hope to enjoy God; we come into the World with a perfect Contrariety to his Nature; the present Time is allotted us to overcome that, and to return to the
Love

To the English READER.

Love of God, without which we can never enjoy Him. Much of this Time is spent already, and we know not how little remains of it.

WERE our Hearts taken off from Things present and temporal; did we constantly deny ourselves, our own Wills, Senses, Appetites, and Passions; did we love the Humility, the Poverty, the Contempt, the Reproaches, and Sufferings of *Jesus Christ*, we should neither disturb the World with new Sects, of which there are too many already, nor persecute others who differed from us in their Sentiments; but we should find so much Work in the mortifying our own corrupt Natures, such Beams to pull out of our own Eyes, so much Need of Pardon and Mercy for our own Sins, such Variety of Temptations to watch against on all Sides, so much Weakness and Propensity to Evil in ourselves, and such an Aversion and Backwardness to follow *Jesus Christ* in a Way so contrary to the Maxims and Customs of the World and Nature; as would require and take up all our Care and Vigilance, and make us treat others with the Spirit of Meekness.

THE



THE
P R E F A C E.

Friendly Reader,

I CANNOT but impart to you several Letters, which I wrote to some of my Friends; wherein I make appear, what is solid Virtue: Because it is a Matter so necessary in this present Age; wherein we see false Virtue bear Sway, or that which seems only to be Virtue in Mens Eyes; and wherein so many deceive themselves, being persuaded that they have true Virtue, when they have nothing but fine Speculations about it. They think they have the Love of God, when they desire to have it: Nevertheless, they have indeed nothing but Self-Love, and it is nothing but Deceit and Lies, when they say we have the Love of God. They do not so much as know the Corruption of their Natures, since they think they may well enough follow this Corruption without sinning, provided they do no E-

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wil reproveable before Men, and that they have the Will to do well and to love GOD. Nevertheless, this is not sufficient for Salvation; for good Desires, without Effect, are Nothing before GOD.

THIS made me resolve to publish those Twenty-five Letters, which treat of true Virtue, that they who aspire to it, may see the State in which they are; as also, if they have acquir'd any Degrees of it; or if their Virtues be only imaginary.

I DO not offer this Matter of true Virtue to all in general, since many would find it hard to be observed: But I speak to Souls disengaged, that is to Believers, who have left the World to follow Jesus Christ; and such will easily understand me; for none are better disposed to understand me, than they who desire to practise true Virtue. To others I say, as St. John to the Soldiers, Do Violence to no Man, defraud no Man, and be content with your Wages. And this he says to them, because he did not find them disposed for farther Perfection. But if the Soldiers had aimed at this, no Doubt St. John would have advised them to forsake all that they possessed; as Jesus Christ did to the young Man in the Gospel, after he had said he had kept the Commandments of GOD.

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THE same I say to those to whom I present these Twenty-five Letters, (which are but the Beginning of my Designs) to let them see where-in it consists.

To those I mean who will embrace and follow it, and not to others; for this would be but to cast Pearls before Swine, or the Childrens Meat to the Dogs. These are yet earthly Souls, and have their Affections wedded to the Wealth, Honours, and Pleasures of this Life; and by consequence are not in a Disposition to put true Virtue in Practice. It seems enough to them not to transgress grossly and outwardly the Commandments of GOD; for they know no other Evils.

BUT Souls, who have abandoned the World to follow Jesus Christ, and to be renewed into his Spirit, ought to labour with all their Strength, to acquire this true Virtue, by renouncing the Corruption of their Nature: And they may be persuaded, they shall never attain to a truly christian Life, unless they overcome corrupt Nature. We must labour diligently in the Mortification of our Senses, that we may get the Victory over that Corruption which Sin has brought into human Nature; without this, our Virtue is false, or apparent only, and not at all that which is Virtue before GOD.

FOR if you show me a Person sober, chaste, and upright in his Affairs; who imparts of his

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Goods to the Poor, who fasts at the appointed Times, and does many other good Works, and nevertheless follows the Motions of corrupt Nature; I make no Reckoning of all these Virtues, if he have not joined to them the Renunciation of his corrupt Nature, and if he have not entirely renounced his own Will: St. Paul names to us greater Virtues than those, when he says, Though I have the Gift of Prophecy; and Faith that could remove Mountains; and though I should give all my Goods to the Poor; if I have not Charity, I am nothing.

Now Charity is no other Thing but the Love of GOD; which cannot be obtain'd but by renouncing Self-love; and bating the Corruption, of our Nature: For we can never do Good, if we depart not from Evil; and all Sorts of Evil are contained in our Nature, since it is fallen into Sin. So that we can never attain true Virtue, but by renouncing this Corruption, no more than the Charity, of which the Apostle speaks, without having overcome it. With him therefore I tell all those who would attain true Virtue, that all other good Actions will avail nothing, until they have overcome the Corruption that Sin has brought into human Nature; since all Sort of Evils flows from it, and no Good can be found in it. Though the Blindness of Men makes them presume that they can do any Good, yet nevertheless all they do is Evil, so long as they act according to the Motions of corrupt Nature;

THE PREFACE.

ture; and it is only *Arrogance and Presumption of Spirit*, that they think themselves wise and willing to do all Good.

WHEN Man was first created by GOD in the State of Innocence, he was full of all Good, and all Manner of Good proceeded from him; but since he fell into Sin, he has been filled with all Evil, and nothing can flow from him, but all Sort of Evil. This is a general Rule, and by it ought every one to regulate his Life, if he would be saved: For there is no Exception for any Body; since all Men in general were corrupted by Adam's Sin, and by Consequence are all full of Evil, without excepting so much as one.

IN Respect of Grace, they are all alike; and by Sin are fallen into the same Corruption, one as well as another: And therefore all have equally Need of opposing this common Corruption, since they are all equally corrupted by Sin; they must overcome it, if they would be saved, without fancying that one is better than another, because he has some better Temperament in his Nature. For this Nature does nothing to Grace, and sometimes he who has more of Fire, will be more virtuous than he who has more of Water; for if he employ his Choler in defending Justice, he will do it much better than a Phlegmatick Person, who usually loves nothing but his Ease.

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THIS I regard also, in writing of solid Virtue: But I do not aim to make it weighty and difficult; I desire only to make it known to those who would practise it; and that because I love them: Thus I cannot leave them in Ignorance, or permit that they perish amidst their Goodwill, for Want of Knowledge.

THIS First Part discovers, among other Things, how the Devil endeavours always to divert Souls from true Virtue, by many different Wiles. In fine, this is a School, wherein we may learn, to deny ourselves, to take up our Cross, and to follow Christ; as He taught all those who would become his Disciples, in the perfect Sense and the true Explication. Receive it then with as good a Heart, as I present it to you with a christian Charity: And I remain,

Friendly Reader,

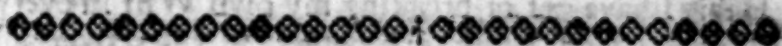
Your very Affectionate in Jesus Christ,

ANTHONETTE BOURIGNON.





TREATISE, &c.



LETTER I.

That all Christians ought to learn of JESUS CHRIST, Meekness, Gentleness, and Humility.

My dear Child,

PERCEIVE you have not as yet comprehended what *Jesus Christ* teaches, when He says, *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble in Heart.* For when Occasion offers, you do not practise it aright, but you give Reins to your Nature: You speak roughly; and sometimes you use Force to accomplish what you have resolved upon, and that as well
In

in little Things, as in great. This does not speak Humility of Heart, since the Humble yields willingly to another in Things that are not evil, and does not think that another should follow his Will. But he is ever well content to follow the Will of another, in all that is not against God, nor against the Perfection of his own Soul.

I THINK you may have observed this in me, for ordinarily I inform myself what is the Will of my Brethren, that I may see what they love most in indifferent Things: And I take more Content to do any Thing according to their Desires, than according to my own, for this gives me more inward Peace and Quiet, and I feel Satisfaction to see them contented. My Temper is inclined to this, by a Habit I have got of breaking my own Will in every Thing: And being overcome, it rules over all Things, and is not troubled at any Thing that falls out contrary to it, when it is not against God's Honour, nor the Love of our Neighbour. All the rest is indifferent to me; whether it rains, or is fair Weather; whether I eat sharp or sweet Meats, provided they do not prejudice Health; whether I be alone or in Company, provided the one be as safe as the other: And in short, I am as well pleased to be in one Country as in another, provided I find there the same Occasions of living well. And thus I am comforted in all Rencounters; whether I be sick, or in Health; I have no Choice, provided I honour God in the one as well as in the other: All is indifferent to me, and I would never make Choice of any Thing. So that I take from God's Hand all that befalls me, and thus I am always content and joyful.

If you could learn this Method, you would be always in Quiet; whereas, at present, by Fretting
and

and Discontent you disquiet your Spirit, and are uneasy to others, and so hinder mutual Love; for an angry Word is not agreeable to any Body, and a mild one softens the Heart even of a furious Man. I believe indeed you love your Brethren; but you speak to them sometimes, as if you hated them, and as if you would not hear them speak. If they spoke as you do, you would hardly suffer them; so you ought to consider that they have much to suffer, when you speak so harshly. They do very well for themselves, when they bear with you; but your Soul has no Profit by it: For though all the World should bear with you, you would not for this be justified before God, nor would your natural Temper change its evil Inclinations, but be strengthened in them: Which you would bewail much before God, when it would be too late.

I COUNSEL you therefore, my Child, to labour after Meekness now; since it is taught by *Christ* Himself. I know you will feel some Repugnance to this; and that you must do Violence to your Nature: But the Kingdom of Heaven must be taken by Force, since it is written, *the Violent take it by Force*. Eternal Life does well deserve the Violence we must do to ourselves, to overcome our evil Habits. Resolve then to overcome this Passion of Anger. It is this that torments you most, and gives the Devil most Advantage against your Soul.

WATCH therefore over yourself, that you may resist it when Occasions offer; for the first Motions of Anger are not in your Power: But it is meet that you make Use of continual Prayer, whereby to oppose these continual Motions. The Sin does not consist in feeling them, but in consenting to them: And therefore, when you feel the Motions of Anger, do not give Place to them; but retire
into,

Into yourself, and beg of God the Strength to resist them. While you are in this State, utter no Words; and when they reply to you what you do not willingly hear, retire rather than answer them: And thus you shall overcome by little and little that Inclination, and become meek and gentle. As to Humility, it teaches us to subject ourselves willingly to the Will of another in all Things that are good, or indifferent; and believe assuredly, that so long as you have a Repugnance to yield to the Will of another, you have not an humble Heart. An humble Heart is always distrustful of itself, and desires rather to obey than to command; it still submits its Opinion to that of others, and will not contend to maintain its own, esteeming it the least of any.

If you had this Humility which *Christ* requires, you would be happy and contented; for Nothing would ever fall out against your Will, which being subjected to God, would always take all Things from his Hand, even though they came from the Wicked, or from the Devil himself, who could not hurt you, while you referred all to God. True Humility consists not in Actions outwardly humble, but in the inward Motions of the Heart, which ought not from the Bottom to desire any longer to be honoured or esteemed, and far less to be followed and obeyed. But an humble Heart does honour and esteem others, and willingly obeys them; since there is Nothing that gives more Repose to a Man than Obedience: For he who has no other Business but to obey, needs not cast about his Mind, to know what he shall do, or what he shall say; he ought only to hear what shall be told him, and follow that; living thus as a Child, without any Care, except that only of pleasing God; which must needs

needs give great Quiet, both inwardly and outwardly.

I do not think that any Body can desire to command, unless he has a proud and arrogant Heart: And we find by Experience, that he who has done his own Will, has often Regret and Displeasure for it afterwards. The Reason is, our Self-will is corrupted by Sin, and so it breeds all Sort of Corruption, to him that follows it. How many have undone themselves, or made themselves miserable for all their Life, by following their own Wills? But he who can find a Person disinterested, and will obey him according to GOD, is most happy and contented.

NOT that I would counsel you to be obedient in Things of Importance, to Men who live according to their own Will (as well as you) for this would be often evil; the corrupt Will of another being as bad as your own. Nevertheless, it will be profitable for your own Perfection, to obey them in Things indifferent, or of small Consequence, when they wrong no Body. And thereby you shall overcome your own Corruption, and accustom yourself to submit willingly to that which will be well-pleasing to GOD. For Custom turns into Nature, and he who accustoms himself to submit to Men for his own Perfection, it will be easy to him to submit also for the same to GOD; and consequently your Heart will still find Repose.

THIS nevertheless we do not observe; for as many Persons as there are of us, we have as many Wills; which discovers in all a Pride of Heart, that is far from observing the Counsel of *Christ, To learn of Him, who is meek and humble in Heart.* We ought to

to retain this Lesson, and to put it in Practice on all Occasions.

INDEED you should try whether what Men propose or desire, be good; and when you do not find it to be certainly so, then examine if it is evil, or if it may hurt or bring Prejudice to any one. And if you judge it to be so, you must excuse yourself from yielding, with all the Mildness you can: But if you resist them with rough and sharp Words, you had better hold your Peace, than speak.

2. *LIKewise* you should love the Occasions of Sufferings, that you may exercise yourself in Christian Perfection. Therefore let not the present Occasion escape, for the past is not in your Power, and what is to come is uncertain. It is only the present Moment, that furnishes us with Means of our Perfection. In like Manner, be not curious to spy the Faults of others; for every one must labour for his own Perfection. Live so, as if you had nothing else to do, but to perfect your own Soul, and to fulfill the Will of God; for nothing concerns you but this. For if all the Men of the World were holy, and you were not, their Virtues would be of no Advantage to you; and if you were virtuous, and all others were vicious, this would take nothing from your Virtue; for God will not demand of us an Account of others, but *He will judge every one according to his Works.*

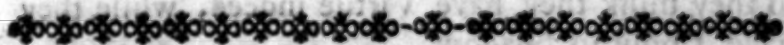
THUS, when you shall have overcome yourself, you shall have overcome all the World; and nothing can be any longer a Hindrance to you; for the Faults of others will even serve you as Means to exercise your Patience, and to become *meek, mild, and lowly in Heart.* And the Virtues of others will stir you up to greater Virtue. So that you will

will prevail over every one; for he who has overcome his Passions, is King over all the Earth, and has subjected all Things to himself, he not being moved with any Thing that falls out.

In Holstein, near Gottorp-Castle, 12 January, 1672.

St. Val.

ANTHONINETTE BOURIGNON.



LETTER II.

Shewing wherein Meekness and Lowliness consist, which cannot be obtained, unless we renounce our own Will.

My dear Child,

I PERCEIVE that you do not yet comprehend the Words of Jesus Christ, where He says, *That we must learn of Him, to be meek and humble in Heart.* Therefore you must know what this Meekness is, otherwise you cannot love it; for we cannot love that which we do not know, and the Reason why true Virtue is so little loved, is, because it is not well known. Men are persuaded that they are virtuous, because they have done some outward good Works, while in the mean Time there is nothing of the Essence of Virtue in them. For true Virtue is a Spiritual Thing, which must possess the Heart of Man; and it cannot be seen, nor felt, but by the Operations which it produces,

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springing from the Bottom of the Heart; and if these good Operations do not proceed from that Fund, but are only studied Things, or done to please Men, or to satisfy ourselves, they add nothing to our Souls, and cannot be rewarded with eternal Life.

BUT they may indeed serve as Means to attain true Virtue, when our Intention is to aspire after it. The Mischief is, that many stop at these Means and outward Virtues, as if they were the End; and so they think they have Virtue indeed, while they have it only in Shadow.

THEREFORE I will teach you what true Virtue is; and in particular *what that Meekness is*. It is no other Thing, but a Peace, a Repose, and Tranquility of Spirit, which resides in the Bottom of our Soul. We may learn to speak meekly, and yet not have the Meekness which *Jesus Christ* says we must learn of Him. We may learn meek Words as a Parrot learns them; and we may even pronounce them out of Civility, or Hypocrisy; for I have known Persons who have appeared very meek in their Behaviour, and yet were inwardly arrogant. We must not therefore amuse ourselves with this outward Meekness, which is oft-times deceitful or natural: For there are Persons so faint-hearted, that they fear to speak a harsh Word, lest this might breed them Trouble, or cause them to meet with a rough Answer. And this Softness makes them mild, both as to Good and Evil. Yet they dare believe that they have the Virtue of Meekness, tho' they have nothing but the Vice of Sloth and Injustice; which makes them yield to the Evil of another, instead of resisting it with Care and Vigour; but they will not take so much Trouble.

BUT

BUT behold what that Meekness contains that *Jesus Christ* tells us we must learn of Him.

IF I have Peace in my Soul, Quiet of Conscience, and Tranquility in my Spirit, be certainly persuaded that you may have them also; for GOD does not refuse his Graces to those who ask and desire them. And He will be loth to refuse that of Meekness, since *Jesus Christ* says, we must learn it of Him; for He will not command us to learn that which is impossible. GOD is just; and therefore He has taught us nothing by *Jesus Christ*, but what He will readily give us.

ALL the Evil lies in this, that we do not desire; and this Desire cannot be great in us, so long as we do not know Him. Many say, that the Holy Spirit does not operate in Souls now, as He did in the Time of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles; because they do not see Him *in the Form of a Dove, or in Tongues of Fire*: Which is a very weak Argument; for the Holy Spirit is not limited to any Time, since He is GOD eternal, who gives his Gifts, and bears his Fruits in all Seasons; and will do it to all Eternity: Since He can never be barren or idle, but operates continually in the Souls which are disposed for it.

TRUE Believers have no Need to see outward Figures to convince them that the Holy Spirit does yet dwell in the Soul of Him that is disposed for it. They may search themselves, if they know what the Holy Spirit is, what are his Gifts, what his Graces, and what his Fruits, of which one is the Meekness that *Jesus Christ* says we must learn of Him.

AND St. Paul places amongst the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, *Goodness, Gentleness*. Which is the same Thing expressed in different Words; and in its Essence it is, Peace, Repose, and Tranquility, residing in the Soul. These Signs are sure Evidences that the Holy Spirit dwells there; for the natural Spirit cannot give either true Peace, or true Repose, or true Tranquility of Mind.

If you do not feel in your Soul true inward Peace, Quiet of Conscience, and Tranquility of Mind, you have not as yet learned of *Jesus Christ* his Meekness and his Lowliness; and therefore you must embrace the Means to attain it.

THE first is, absolutely to desire and will it, which I believe, by the Grace of GOD, you do. Secondly, you must endeavour to remove all Sort of Hindrances, which retard this Peace and Tranquility. The Hindrances are in our corrupt Nature; for since Sin, Men are fallen into a continual Trouble, War, and Disquiet. And our Passions being disordered, breed all these Things; and they cannot be governed and kept in Peace, unless we have resisted and overcome them, and have also renounced our natural Inclinations.

THIS is the Reason why *Jesus Christ* says, *That we must deny ourselves, if we would become his Disciples*. For it is only this Denial of our Passions, that is the true Mean to find this Peace; for since Sin came, our Passions rob us of this. If we will let our Passions rule, they will lead us to Intemperance, Vexation, and Disquiet of Spirit: So that it is impossible that one who lives according to his natural Senses, can learn Meekness and Humility. And therefore He adds, *That a Man must deny himself*. For the one cannot be without the other. If

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we would be meek and lowly, as *Christ* teaches, we must deny ourselves; since our corrupt Nature has nothing but Bitterness and Fretting, which breeds a Man trouble in his Mind, Disquiet in his Will, and Contention with his Neighbour. For he who has not Meekness in himself, cannot have Peace with his Neighbour; and if he have, it is nothing but counterfeit, which gives no inward Peace, nor Tranquility in his Spirit, as I am persuaded you experience in yourself; for though you have a Repose in having quitted the Occasions of Sin, yet you have not inward Peace. But we see you act yet with Disturbance, which proceeds from corrupt and disorderly Passions. The Meekness of our Heart begets Gentleness towards our Neighbour: For he who has Tranquility within himself, will not give his Neighbour Trouble, nor Occasion of Vexation in any Thing; since the Meekness of the Good quenches the Anger of the Wicked. And though one who has learned the Meekness of *Jesus Christ* were in the Midst of all Sort of Troubles, yet he would preserve the Tranquility of his Mind; for he would not follow the Motions of his corrupt Nature, and by this Means he preserves the Repose in which he is, by Meekness and Gentleness.

If you would learn this Lesson, endeavour to deny yourself, and not to follow your own Will in any Thing: For it has been corrupted by Sin, and therefore is inclined always to Evil. Be jealous of all that proceeds from your own Will, and do not follow it in any Thing. It is it that robs you of Meekness and Gentleness; and we have no greater Enemy in the World than our Self-will. If you could comprehend this Truth well, you would not follow it in any Thing; and you would distrust even your Good-will and Intentions. But because

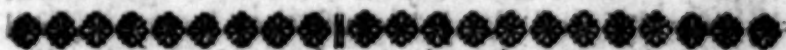
you do not yet sufficiently know that your own Will is evil, you do not distrust it: Nevertheless it betrays you often, and which is more, it leads you to do Evil when you would do Good. The inward Intention of your Heart is good, but your Self-will opposes your good Desires, and you do often the quite contrary to what you have well resolved. If I were in your Place, I would never follow my own Will in any Thing, and I would look upon all my own Will as evil; since no Good can ever proceed from a Thing wholly corrupted. All that is good must come from God; and all that is evil from the Devil, and from the corrupt Will of Man. That is as a Fire that kindles in our Nature, Luxury, Wrath, and all Sorts of Intemperance: It is insatiable, never satisfied, ever coveting what it has not, restless in its Desires, eager in its Pursuits, always thirsty, never contented; in short, our Self-will breeds us more Mischief, than the Devil himself does; for he could not hurt Man any Way, if his Self-will did not consent to it. When therefore we shall have overcome our Self-will, we shall also have overcome the Devil; for he can never make us sin, but by moving our Will to obey him. For this Cause all Men in general ought to war against their own Wills. Nevertheless, few look on it as their Enemy, and very many make it their Idol, and esteem themselves happy when they can follow it in all Things, without considering that it brings Death to the Soul.

From Holstein, near Gottorp-

Castle, 5 February, 1672.

St. Vet.

LETTER



LETTER III.

*Men could sufficiently know the Will of God,
if they would perform it.*

My dear Child,

I BELIEVE you have understood sufficiently by my former, what the Meekness and Gentleness is that *Jesus Christ* says we must learn of Him; how the Will of Man is corrupted by Sin, and how we must now war against it and overcome it, if we would find Peace in our Souls, Quiet of Conscience, and Tranquility of Spirit.

BUT you cannot comprehend how you may so know the Will of God in all Things, that you may follow it, and forsake your own Will.

BELIEVE me, this Doubt proceeds from your corrupt Nature, which would fain excuse itself from being obliged to renounce this Self-will; and would gladly follow it, if it could shun the Obligation of resisting it; and thus it persuades itself that it does not know the Will of God in all Things, that it might follow it. The Heart of Man is so deceitful, that he persuades his Understanding, he knows not the Will of God; and consequently cannot fulfil it in all Things. But this is a Deceit of *Satan*, that he may amuse us by Appearances of Truth, which indeed are nothing but.

but Lies. For all may know the Will of GOD, if they please: But they will needs be ignorant of it, (for the most Part) because they have no Mind to obey it, even though they knew it; and when they do know it, the Love they have for themselves makes them say, that they do not know it: Yet sometimes they have the Confidence to say, that they would do it, if they knew it.

THEREFORE we should earnestly desire to discover the Truth in a Thing of so great Importance; and never lull ourselves asleep upon a Pillow of Suppositions, which are not true: For he who sins ignorantly, goes ignorantly to Hell; since all Christians are obliged to know the Will of GOD, which is clearly manifested to them by his Commandments. There are very few Christians who do not know that GOD has commanded, *To love Him with all their Heart, and their Neighbour as themselves.* And yet there are fewer who observe these Commands; and in the mean Time they say, *If I knew the Will of GOD, I would follow it.* And thus they lye to GOD and to themselves, though they are persuaded they speak Truth. So great is the Darkness in which Men live, as to their Salvation.

It may be truly said, that at present they are given up to the Spirit of Error, and that the Scripture had good Reason to say, *All Men are Lyars;* since they lye to themselves, to the Prejudice of their eternal Salvation, and that sometimes without knowing it. For in this, that they say they would follow the Will of GOD, if they knew it, they lye; since they do not follow it as to the first Commandment, to wit, *that of loving GOD with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as ourselves.* For to love GOD with all our Heart, we ought not to love any Thing.

Thing but Him alone, otherwise our Heart is divided, instead of being entire in the Love of GOD. So that if we love the Riches, the Pleasures, and the Honours of this Life, we do not love GOD with all our Heart, though we know this is his Will: And when we envy our Neighbour, and do not help him in his Need, we do not love him as ourselves; and thus we do often to him, what we would not have done to ourselves. In which we do not follow the Will of GOD, though we certainly know his Will, that we should love our Neighbour as ourselves. And thus we do not practise the Will of GOD that we know; but we seek, besides that which is so clearly revealed, a more particular Will in Things of little Moment, and neglect to fulfil his Will in what concerns our eternal Salvation.

It is therefore much to be feared, that we would not do the Will of GOD in little Things, though we knew it, since we will not do it in Things so great, and so profitable for our eternal Happiness. So that this would be to tempt GOD, to ask of Him what his Will is in all Things, when we do not fulfil it in the chief Things, as his express Commandments.

I HAVE heard Men say, that it is a great Happiness to be able to discover in all Things the Will of GOD. And yet, if this were given them, it is to be feared it would turn to their greater Condemnation: *For he who knows his Father's Will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* And the Reason why GOD does not communicate Himself to all Christians, is, because they are not disposed to do his Will, when it is contrary to their own. Therefore every one ought to endeavour to fulfil the Will of GOD, which he knows by his Com-

Commandments, rather than ask of GOD particular Things, so long as he does not fulfil the principal Commands of GOD, and of *Jesus Christ*. *Jesus Christ* deduces in particular all that we ought to do and avoid; to fulfil the Command of loving GOD with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as ourselves, saying, *Learn of Me, who am meek*. Meekness is one of the essential Qualities of GOD, which seems to surpass his other Qualities. It is like Oil among other Liquors, which always swims above; for we see in all the Works of GOD, his Goodness and Meekness super-abound more than his other Qualities. Though his Goodness is never separated from his Righteousness and Truth, yet it is exalted above his Righteousness and his Truth.

FOR in many Things we see that GOD has stopt his Wrath, to give Place to his Goodness; as he did to the People of *Nineveh*, who by their Sins had justly merited GOD's Justice; yea, and the Truth of GOD had foretold, that within forty Days their City should be destroyed. But as soon as that People repent, the Goodness of GOD gets uppermost, and swims above his Justice and his Truth, and He pardons them of his great Meekness and Goodness. And since *Jesus Christ* exhorts us to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, we ought to labour particularly to acquire this Virtue, this Perfection of our heavenly Father. Righteousness and Truth respect GOD; Meekness and Gentleness respect also our Neighbour. And tho' one were just and true before GOD, yet he must be also meek and gentle, otherwise he loves not his Neighbour as himself; seeing he gives him not that Testimony of Love to which that Command obliges. And because GOD only knows the Heart, it is not enough that one be good inwardly, it must also be testified.

testified outwardly by Gentleness; otherwise our Neighbour cannot be edified.

EXERCISE yourself therefore in this Virtue, and beg of **GOD** Meekness and Gentleness. He will never be wanting on his Part to give you his Grace, provided you do not fail on your Part. This is one of his Commands, and He cannot command any Thing but what He will give us Grace to observe.

BUT our Nature is like a Horse, to which sometimes you must give the Bridle, and sometimes the Spur, to make it turn and go whither it is meet. And though it have a Repugnance to act contrary to its own Motions and Inclinations, yet you must not give it loose Reins, and let it go where it will. For our Will is always evil, since it was corrupted by Sin, and is no longer capable to make one good Determination; but it must be kept in with a Bridle, as a Horse is managed, otherwise it would precipitate our Souls into Hell.

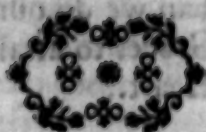
ENDEAVOUR first of all to attain Meekness. After, if any other particular Knowledge be needful, undoubtedly He will reveal it to you in due Time; and He will never be wanting to shew us what we have a Desire to obey, no more than He will be wanting to give his Graces necessary for attaining Christian Perfection. For He desires our Perfection more than we do ourselves; He will not then refuse us his Graces to attain it, if we ask them with Humility of Heart.

FOR without Humility, no Prayers are acceptable to **GOD**; and our Meekness and Gentleness cannot be good, if not accompanied with Humility; for one may be meek and gentle by Nature, or Hypocritise. This is often a Sin before **GOD**, instead of

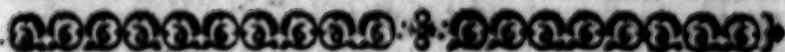
of a Virtue; but that Gentleness which is seeming only, shall have no Praise but from Men.

No Virtues, which proceed not from the Bottom of our Heart, and are not generated there by Divine Faith, can have an eternal Reward; they are recompenced only by the Praise of Men, who judge of Things by Appearance; but God searches the Heart. Therefore Humility, Meekness and Gentleness, are knit together, which cannot be separated, no more than Righteousness, Goodness and Truth, which correspond to the three Persons of the Trinity in God, and are joined inseparably in all his Works, of which if one were wanting, his Work could not be perfect. Even so Meekness and Gentleness would be imperfect, if they were separated from Humility; which must infallibly beget true Meekness and Gentleness: For an humble Heart is always meek and gentle.

*From Holstein, near Göttorp-
Castle, the 9th of Feb. 1672.
St. Vet.*



LETTER



LETTER IV.

Humility consists in the Knowledge of one's Self.

My dear Child,

IN my last, I exhorted you to Humility of Heart: But I know not if you understand well what this Humility is, wherein it consists, and by what Means you may discover if you have it or not. Therefore I have resolved to speak more particularly of it, that in all Things you may discern true Virtue from that which is so only in Appearance: And may lay in your Soul a good Foundation of solid Virtue, without amusing yourself with seeming or imaginary Virtues, which in God's Sight are of no Value.

HUMILITY is the Foundation of all Virtues; it begets many others, and roots out many Vices, which cannot abide in an humble Heart; such as Pride, Presumption, Avarice, Pomp, Vain-glory, and many other Sins, which proceed from Pride of Heart: When it becomes humble, all these Vices vanish away.

HUMILITY is a perfect Knowledge of one's Self. For he that knows himself, can never have any Esteem for himself. He will not glory in the Praises of Men. He will not desire Riches, that he may be adorned or served: For an humble Heart is per-

suaded that it deserves Nothing; and the least Things content and satisfy it.

AN humble Heart is not angry at being debased or despised, for it sees it deserves nothing but Contempt; being as to the Spirit, frail, ignorant and inconstant; and as to the Body, full of Miseries, Infirmities, Diseases, and liable to Death and Corruption.

NONE of these Things afford Matter for a Man to exalt himself, or to esteem himself in any wise; but rather Ground to be abased and humbled before GOD and Men, because of his Infirmities and Miseries. Yet we see Men make themselves great, are proud, and value themselves much, and in short, judge themselves worthy of all Sorts of Honours, Pleasures and Services, every one advancing himself with all his Power. All proceeds from this, that Men do not know themselves: For if they did, they would be ashamed to glory in their Miseries, Folly, and Ignorance: For Man has nothing else in himself, and all these Defects are annexed to his corrupt Nature. We need but open the Eyes of our Understanding to see the Miseries of our Mind, and how it is tossed by different Motions, and disorderly Passions.

AND we need but open the Eyes of the Body, to discern the bodily Miseries, to which all the Bodies of Men are liable. He can neither endure too much Heat, nor too much Cold; a little too much Exercise wearies him; he must rest and sleep, else he loses his Strength and Health: The Body must be cloathed and fed, cleansed and cherished, whereby the Understanding is occupied, in Care, Labour and Disquiet, to relieve the Infirmities of this Body. And to how many Sorts of Diseases is
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the Body of Man liable? They are almost innumerable; and it is said that the Eye alone is liable to fifty Sorts: To how many then must all the other Members, since each has its particular Diseases? Besides the disorderly Motions of the Passions, as of Fear, Terror, Sadness, Melancholy, Anger, Jealousy, and so many other Sorts of Evils, to which Man is subject during this miserable Life: Where he has no Subject of Glorifying, but great Reason to abase himself in the View of so many Miseries, to which his Sin has reduced him; so that he has good Cause to humble himself before God and Men, being so miserable both in his Body and his Mind; for the Spirit has its Maladies as well as the Body: For do but take Notice of yourself, and you shall find that the Mind is tossed with various superfluous Desires and useless Thoughts, which often carry it away against its Intention. *It is not in the Power of Man to restrain his Thoughts.* Which every one may feel; for when we would fix our Thoughts to Prayer, or any other good Thing, they waver here and there, and we cannot retain them.

WHAT Changes do we not feel in our Spirit? We can scarce reckon the Changes there are in one Day, of Joy and Sadness, Hope, Displeasure and Desires. How many different Thoughts? We love at one Time, what we hate at another; what we desire one Day, is displeasing to us another. So that oft-times we ourselves know not what we would be at; and we are often vexed for having obtained what we desired. And if a Man should write all the Thoughts and Desires which pass in his Spirit, he himself would be ashamed; and would be far from being proud of the Qualities of his Mind, any more than those of his Body.

MEN indeed imagine, that they are wise, when they are very ignorant. For I do not believe that they have yet truly discovered one Science, even in Nature; and how can they then in spiritual Things? Nevertheless, we will needs search curiously into profound Mysteries; and yet we know not natural Things, which we see and handle. One boasts of being a Doctor in Physick, another in Divinity, another in Astronomy, and so of all the other Sciences; though they be all equally ignorant of what they think they know well. And this proceeds from that Wind of Pride which the Devil has blown into their Spirits, persuading them that they are learned, and worthy of Esteem and Honour.

As this Ignorance is great in Regard of bodily Physick, it is yet greater in Regard of the spiritual, which is Theology; for it kills many more Souls, than Physick does Bodies. And so the one has no Ground to glory in their Learning, more than the other, being they are equally ignorant.

THE true Wisdom, in Respect of which all the Wisdom of Men is but Folly, is, the Knowledge of themselves; in which consists the true Humility which *Jesus Christ* says we must learn of Him.

In Holstein, from Gottorp-
Castle, January 13, 1672.
St. Vst.



LETTER V.

*On the same Subject.**My dear Child,*

YOU have seen by my last what Humility is, where I have shewn you, that it consists in the Knowledge of one's Self; and that no Body can ever be proud, but for Want of knowing himself; for in knowing himself, he will find Matter enough of being humbled, by seeing the Miseries and Infirmities both of his Body and Mind. For he who will seriously reflect upon himself, shall not only discover his own Nothingness, but will judge himself much worse than nothing; and consequently will be far from esteeming himself, unless he be altogether a Fool, and void of all Reason and Understanding. For if he judge by an upright Judgment, what he is, he shall see nothing but Misery and Infirmities in his Nature, and Ignorance and Disorder in his Spirit; for a Beast knows more Things than he, for the Conduct of his Life; and is more moderate in Eating and Drinking, and other natural Things, than Man, who we see frequently exceeds in these Things, which the Beasts do not. Hence is it that Men are much more subject to Diseases than the Beasts, because they live in greater Intemperance. And when Man finds himself less wise in the Conduct of his Life than a Beast, he ought to be greatly humbled before GOD and Man.

YET that evil Spirit makes him believe, that he is worthy of Honour, either for his Learning, or Wealth, or Virtue, though he is contemptible even in all these very Respects: For his Wisdom is nothing but Folly before GOD; and his Riches are a heavy Burden, and cause Trouble and Disquiet to preserve them; and his Virtue must needs be feigned, when it is not founded on the Knowledge of his own Nothingness, or on the Truth of his Miseries.

THEREFORE Self-esteem can never be any other than mere Folly, which *Satan* foists into Mens Spirits and Understandings; since really there is nothing in them estimable as to the corrupted Nature; but Abundance of Miseries worthy of Contempt and Scorn.

So that we may truly call a proud Man a very Fool, for he glories in his Miseries, and judges his Ignorance to be Wisdom; and his Troubles, Riches; such is temporal Wealth, which brings continual Cares and Disquiets, both in the acquiring and preserving it.

SOME of the very Heathens were wiser. They despised the Honours and Pleasures of this Life; nay, some seeing them so miserable, and of so short Continuance, would not take the Pains to build a House to lodge in: One was content with a Tub, for a Cover from the Sun and Rain; another seeing his Hand would serve to carry Water to his Mouth, would no longer make Use of a Cup to drink in. So firmly did they despise this present Life, that they would not take any Pleasure in it, nor make Use of the Creatures farther than for urgent Necessity, taking the least they could, and rejecting the rest.

THIS they did, because they knew that all the Honours and Pleasures of this World are vain, false, and deceitful: And they despised them, that they might attain the true ones, which are eternal. They longed therefore to be delivered from this Life, which they looked on as a Prison, or a Valley of Tears.

BUT Men now do not discover this. They count him happy that can take his Pleasure in Eating and Drinking, and Recreations, or in giving other carnal Satisfactions to his Body. Yet such are far more miserable than those that live soberly and chastly. He who is content with a little, has no Need of much, and is more joyful in his Recollection of Spirit, than if he were in the most diverting Company.

HE also that lives soberly, is better pleased with his coarse Fare, than they are who seek to please their Appetites and Palates, which are insatiable. And he that lives chastely, preserves his Liberty, and the Quiet of his Conscience.

He that will please the World, has lost his Liberty, and can no longer serve himself. He is as an hired Servant, subjected to all Sorts of Vanities; subject to the Great and Wise Ones of the World, whom he fears more than God Himself. And in the mean Time, Men think themselves happy to be thus bound to the World; to which they willingly yield themselves Slaves: Otherwise they would disengage themselves, and not let their Spirits be so far bewitched, as to think that Slavery is Freedom, and Fetters are Chains of Gold, which is mere Falshood and Vanity: For to serve God only, is to reign; and to serve the World, is to be a Slave.

WHICH

WHICH those wise Heathens knew, and therefore they despised the World, and its Honours and Pleasures. Yea, some of them cared not to be visited by Kings or Emperors, entreating them to retire from them, because they kept them from seeing the Sun; adding, that they took from them what they could not give them; to wit, the Sunshine, which they valued more than all the Kingdoms of the World.

IN which they had great Reason; for the greatest Offices afford also the greatest Troubles; and he that is over others, is Servant of all; for he must take Care of them, and rule and govern them, as he will answer to GOD.

THEREFORE a Superior is more miserable than any other, both in Time, and for Eternity. This may be seen even in the Master of a Family, who must take Care and Labour to sustain and provide for his Wife, Children, and Servants, while they are often without Care, knowing that their Master must feed and cloath them, that they may want nothing; in which they are much happier than he; for they have only one Service to perform, and the Master is burthened with many.

*From Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, 15th of Feb. 1672.
St. Vet.*



L E T T E R VI.

He that follows the Desires of his Senses, thereby renounces the Love of God.

My dear Child,

I HAVE shewn you the Truth of many Things, that you might attain Humility of Heart. It is much to understand these Things aright; but you must also set about the Practice of them, and embrace in good Earnest the Mortification of your Senses, in Pursuance of the Truths you have learned; otherwise it will be small Matter to know the Truth, if you put it not in Practice. Knowledge is very good, for we cannot practise what we do not know; but if this Knowledge be not fruitful, it can be of no Use for our Salvation. We must be resolute, and war against our corrupt Nature; otherwise we shall die the eternal Death, after the temporal.

THIS may be easily conceived, since Man's Nature is corrupted by Sin; and he has quitted his Dependence on his God, to depend upon himself. Of Necessity then this Nature must remain in that Corruption, 'till every Man for his own Particular, has overcome it; otherwise he continues and dies in the State of Death and Damnation.

For

FOR tho' *Adam* had not sinned, all Men in general, and every one in particular, might have sinned and corrupted his Way, leaving off to depend upon his GOD; and that because all Men were created free, and may continue in a Dependence upon GOD, and may withdraw from it: So he that is arrived to the Use of Reason, has the same Liberty to sin, and to withdraw from a Dependence upon GOD, that *Adam* had; yet with this Difference, that *Adam* at the Beginning had not in his Nature that Inclination to Evil, which Men have who proceeded from him after his Sin; for they have contracted this from their first Father, and also the Infirmities of Body which we see in all Men, and feel in ourselves: For no Body is exempted from the Evils which Sin has caused in human Nature; though it is free to all Men to follow this Inclination to Evil, which they feel in themselves; as they may also, by the Grace of GOD, overcome their Infirmities, and the Corruption of their Senses; and not follow them, but fight against them.

AND it is in this that *Jesus Christ* says, *We must take the Kingdom of Heaven by Violence; and the Violent take it by Force*: Not that we should fight by Force to gain the Kingdom; for GOD created it for us, and He gives it us freely. But the Meaning is, we must resist forcibly the Corruption of our Nature, that we may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and so must not approve in us the Sin which *Adam* committed, nor by our Self-will quit our Dependence upon GOD. Therefore *Our Life is a continual Warfare*; for we must continually resist the Corruption of our Senses: Without this we can never return to a Dependence on GOD, from which *Adam's* Sin hath withdrawn us; since our Souls being corrupted, beget all Sorts of Sin,

Sin, and we need but follow their Inclination, to turn us away from God, and to keep us in the Way of Damnation.

FOR we no sooner give Reins to our Sight, than it pleases itself to behold beautiful or curious Things; and no sooner have we considered them, but we covet. If we indulge the Sense of Hearing, the Heart delights in it, and the Affection is carried away by it. And if we please ourselves in Taste, all our Care is employed to seek Means to satisfy it; and that Sense is more insatiable than any other, and precipitates into all Sorts of Sins. Moreover, it excites the Sense of Feeling; for he who satisfies his Taste, seeks also to satisfy his Feeling. Even all the Senses are excited only by the Love we have for ourselves, and the Desire we have of affording ourselves Pleasure.

ALL these Things certainly withdraw us from God, and from a Dependence on Him; and He has commanded us *to love Him with all our Heart*: So that He will not have us set our Hearts on Things so vile and frail, as are the Sight, Hearing, Taste, and Feeling: For this is unworthy of a divine Soul, which God has given us, capable of loving an eternal God; who desires and commands that we love Him with all our Heart.

AND this is from the Disorder which the Devil has caused in Man's Nature, when he makes it turn that Affection towards the Creatures which is due to God alone. In which consisted the first Sin that Man committed, and thence all other Sins draw their Original. For nothing can be Evil, or Sin, but what is committed against the Will of God; and there is nothing but this that
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can be Evil, as nothing can be Good but what is done according to his Will.

So the Devil has earnestly laboured from the Beginning of the World, to turn aside Man from the Will of GOD; who created him that he might take Delight with Him, and therefore willed that he should love Him with all his Heart. Now there cannot be Delight but with that which is loved, and therefore GOD will be loved by Man with all his Heart, and will not have him place his Affection on any other Thing, but on Him alone. The Devil no sooner perceived this, but he enticed him by the Senses (which are as Windows of our Heart) that he might withdraw our Hearts from GOD, and place them on visible and sensible Things.

THE Devil therefore did first move *Adam's* Heart to look on the beautiful Creatures which GOD had created for Him. He excited also his Sense of Hearing, to hearken to the false Persuasions of the Serpent, who made him believe that he should know Good and Evil, if he eat of the Fruit of the Tree, of which GOD had forbidden him to eat. He moves his Hand to make him touch that Apple, his Smell to smell it, and his Taste to eat it. And thus the Devil led *Adam's* Heart to the Love of the Creatures, and turned him away from the Love he owed to GOD:

If the Devil could have drawn Man's Heart directly to love himself, he would have done it; but this he could not do. Therefore he makes Use of visible and sensible Creatures, that indirectly he might make Man love him; and that by moving him to love himself, and to make Use of all the other Creatures to satisfy his Self-love, and
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consequently to withdraw him from the Love of God. This he hath done with too much Success, since he made *Adam*, and all Men who were to proceed from him, disobey God; and thus he made him abandon this Dependence, so that he would no longer depend but upon his own Will, and love nothing but himself.

BEHOLD the miserable Fall into which the Devil caused all Men to fall in *Adam*; and all in general are born in this Misery and Disobedience since *Adam's* Fall, and in like Manner they come into the World with this evil Inclination of loving themselves, and following the Corruption of their Senses, which breeds all Sorts of Sins; for they are now moved by an evil Spirit, whence no Good can come.

God never created any Evil, but Man produced it, when he deprived himself of God's Friendship, in which alone consists all Sorts of Good. And this is what we call Sin, which signifies the turning away from God, who is all Good, and in the Privation of Him is all Evil. So that he who withdraws his Affections from God, to place them on himself, or any Creature, has abandoned all Good, and embraced all Sort of Evil.

BUT tho' all Men should go to Perdition, you must endeavour to save your own Soul. The great Number of the Damned would never lessen your Pains, if you should be damned with them, but it would rather augment them by the Augmentation of Cries, Blasphemies, and the Noisomness of Fire and Brimstone, which shall augment in Hell according as the Number of the Damned shall increase. Therefore I counsel you to leave that common Blindness of Men, who reckon nothing

to be Sin but material Things. But GOD is a pure Spirit, whom not only these gross material Things offend, as Drunkenness, Theft, Whoredom, and other material Sins; but He is offended to see the Heart of Man cleave unto Things so vile, since He created it to love GOD only. And yet Man turns away from GOD, and delights in Eating, Drinking, Cloathing, and Recreating himself with any other Creature.

WHICH greatly displeases GOD, and Man becomes his Enemy by Disobedience, while he acts against the Designs that GOD had in creating him after his own Image and Likeness, that he might take his Delight in Him. Nevertheless Man, contrary to the Will of GOD, takes Delight in himself, and in the Creatures which are less than himself. For whatsoever is created under Heaven, is far below Man, who is as the Master-piece of the Works of GOD, and is set over all the other inferior Creatures; being made as a little GOD in his Divine Nature, which is shut up in his Humanity.

BUT the proud Devil could not endure that Man should have Dominion over the other Creatures, and he himself be rejected and banished from the Friendship of GOD, deprived of all Good, and replenish'd with all Evil. He endeavours then with Rage and Envy to undo Man with himself, and to make him the Companion of his Miseries; and seeing Man made up of a Body and Spirit, he insinuates himself into his Spirit, endeavouring to unite himself with him, under a Pretext of procuring his Good. Thus he makes him imagine that he should know all Things as GOD, if he would eat of the Fruit which GOD had forbidden him; and these Thoughts being entered into *Adam's* Spirit, they gain upon his Affection, and make him

him forget the Love and Obedience which he owed unto GOD ; beginning to love himself, and to seek out Ways to please himself.

Now, GOD had given unto Man natural Senses, by which he might taste all that GOD had created for him, provided he praised and thanked the Creator for so many good Things. But he began to use his Senses to please himself, and to ascribe to himself the Graces that GOD had bestowed on him, as if they had been his own, and he had been the Sovereign of them, independently from his GOD.

GOD would oblige him to love Him by an Excess of Benefits ; and therefore created so many good and beautiful Creatures, only for Pleasure to Man ; having created all Sort of delicious Fruits for his Nourishment, and so many other Creatures to please his Sense of Feeling, that he might lack nothing either for Sustenance or Pleasure, but might use them at Will, provided he bless'd the LORD who had made them for him.

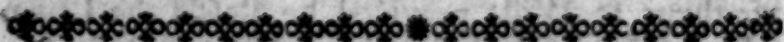
BUT Man falls from this Acknowledgment of his GOD, and takes all his Gifts for his own Satisfaction ; and thus he forsook the Love of GOD, and turn'd to love himself : Which has necessarily rendered him the Enemy of GOD ; for such Ingratitude is insupportable, tho' it were committed but by one Man to another.

FOR what Man would be satisfied, to have desired the Friendship and Fidelity of another, having on this Consideration bestowed on him his Goods in Abundance, and procured him all Sorts of Pleasures, that he might faithfully keep Friendship with him ; if this Wretch should quit his Be-

refactor, to take his Pleasure in the Goods which he had so freely received? How much more then should God resent the Ingratitude of Man, while he places his Affection on the Things which God has so liberally bestowed on him, and that to oblige him to love Him? Yet Man has forsaken Him, and pleases himself only in Self-love.

THIS you ought to consider well, that you may not render yourself guilty before this Great Majesty, and that you may discover, if you are not obliged to embrace voluntarily *Adam's Penitence*, since you have so often fallen into the same Sin, in quitting the Love of and Dependence upon your God, to love yourself, and to depend upon your own Will.

Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, 18th of Feb.
1672.



LETTER VII.

Of the Love of God.

My Child,

I WILL not believe that you are one of those inconsiderate Persons, who say; *That there is no great Evil in following the Motions of Nature.* God, say they, created Nature, and He cannot be offended when we follow it.

SEVERAL

SEVERAL Persons of my Acquaintance have been of this Mind: They were given to Lasciviousness, and they would say to me, *GOD would not punish them for this, seeing He Himself had given them such a Nature.* Thus they flattered themselves in their Sins, to satisfy their Senses. Moreover they would say, *GOD has given all these to Man, and we cannot be without Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Feeling.* All this is true; but they had not Light enough to discern the miserable Estate, into which Man is fallen by Sin, from that happy one wherein GOD created him.

MAN might enjoy the Pleasures of his Senses, provided he loved and blessed GOD. But since he fell into Sin, he can no longer enjoy them, without offending GOD, if the Pleasure he now takes in them is only to satisfy himself, for his own Glory, and his own Advantage. Before Sin, the Satisfaction of his Senses served only to make him praise, and bless, and glorify the LORD, for the Benefits and Mercies which he had received from Him. He no sooner saw beautiful Things, but his Heart was lifted up to praise GOD, who had given him those Beauties, those Melodies, those fragrant Odours, delicious Tastes, and soft Touches. So that all the good and pleasant Things that he saw or felt, gave him Occasion to bless GOD, and magnify Him for his Benefits.

BUT since Man fell into Sin, these very Things are to him Matter of offending GOD; for if he see any beautiful Thing, his Heart covets it to please himself, and this Self-love withdraws him from the Love of GOD. This is it which makes Sin, seeing He has commanded us to love Him with all our Heart. So that we cannot love beautiful Things, without breaking this Command;

seeing all our Heart cannot be in the Love of God, when a Part of it is set upon beautiful Things, fine Smells, Melodies, the Delights of Taste and Feeling. For then it is a Heart divided into as many Parts as it loves different Things; and consequently it is very far from being entire in the Love of God, as He has commanded us.

BUT Men are so blind, and do so blind one another, that every one persuades himself he loves God, when he loves only himself. This is as if they thought they pleased God with Words, in saying with the Mouth that they love Him, but they deceive themselves; for as long as they will satisfy their Senses, they will not love God: For these being corrupted, will engender all Sort of Sins, and consequently the Death of the Soul. Nevertheless, Men make no Reckoning of all these Evils, and they think it is lawful to satisfy their Senses. Thus they follow them (often as much as they can) without believing that they do Evil, and without considering *that there is nothing more deceitful than the Heart of Man*, which often flatters itself to its own Ruin. But you, my Child, be more wise, and learn the Truth of Things, without suffering yourself to be deceived by false Appearances.

NEVER believe that it is lawful to take any Pleasure out of God; and far less that there is no Evil in following your Senses: For though we give our Affections but for an Hour to any Thing that is not God, we are for that Hour turn'd aside from God, and turn'd toward the Creature, which is Sin, since we do in this what God has forbidden; to wit, *we cease to love Him with all our Heart*. For we ought to love Him always, and at all Times,

Times, without Interruption. We ought therefore to bridle our Senses, and give them Laws, that they may take no other Liberty but to follow the Will of God. We may indeed use these Senses, and employ them to the Glory of God who gave them; for we cannot be without Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Feeling; but we must not take Pleasure in these Things for our own Satisfaction; we ought to employ them only in Things necessary, and such as may serve for the Glory of God, and the Good of our Neighbour.

For Example; Man is made up of a Soul and a Body, and he has Need to employ all his Senses for the Preservation of both. He must see and look upon all Things that may serve for the Perfection of his Soul, and hear and taste, smell and feel them, loving them as the Means of his Salvation: He must also look upon all Things that he needs for the Maintenance of his Body; to which his Senses may be very helpful: For he must see the Things that are necessary for him; as a House to dwell in, Cloaths to cover him, Food to nourish him; all these Things must be looked to. He must hear what the Means are to obtain them; he must smell them, that he may take nothing for his Nourishment that is hurtful; and taste and touch them for the same Reason; for all Things necessary are good; and it can never be Sin to use them for Necessity: But it is always Evil to make Use of them for satisfying our sensual Pleasure, because our Love ought to be to God alone, not to Things so base and vile; which we may well use, but not love them, seeing God will have our whole Heart.

THIS

THIS was figured by the earthly Paradise, where GOD placed Man at the Beginning of the World. He gave him full Liberty to eat of all Sorts of delicious Fruit, but He reserved that of one only Tree, of which He forbade Man to eat. And this, to make us understand that GOD permits us indeed to use all the Creatures which He has created for us, provided we keep our Affection for Him only. Thus He forbids us to place it on any other Thing; as the First Commandment shews, of *loving GOD with all our Heart*; that is, that our Heart ought not to be divided, but ought to be wholly for Him. But Men do not pierce into this as they ought; they persuade themselves that it is lawful to love several other Things with GOD; in which they greatly deceive themselves, since GOD's Command does clearly express it, *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart*. If it had been lawful to love any other Things with GOD, He would not have added, [*with all thine Heart*.]

WE start Questions and Disputes upon so many Mysteries of our Faith, and so many Degrees of Virtue, and we neglect the chief Part, and that in which all Faith and all Virtue consist. For what will it profit a Man to have pierced into all the Secrets of Nature, and even into all the Doctrines of the most mysterious Theology, if with all this he fulfil not the Command of *loving GOD with all his Heart*; but have his Heart divided into divers Affections? All his Knowledge will profit him Nothing. We must therefore fulfil this First Commandment, of *loving GOD with all our Heart*.

I KNOW well there are several Glosses to explain how we ought to love GOD with all our Heart. Some say, we must love Him above other Things,

Things, and that if we have one Ounce of Love to our Money, our Honour, our Pleasures, our Parents, or even ourselves, we must have a Pound for God; and that so we fulfil this First Command, and *love GOD with all our Heart*. Others say, we ought so to love Him, that if the Case were that we must lose God, or our Wealth, Parents, or any other Thing, we should chuse rather to lose all than God. Others say, it is impossible to fulfil this Command. And thus every one endeavours to extinguish in the Spirit of Man, this Necessity of loving God with all our Heart. Which is very lamentable, and it grieves me when I see so many prefer these Glosses to the express Commands of God. He added in vain these Words, *with all thy Heart*, if we might place one Part of our Affections on any Creature. Yet God never did any Thing in vain. If He had not intended to shew, that Men ought to love Him with all their Affections indivisibly, He would not have added, *with all thy Heart*.

PRAY consider, if God does not well deserve that we love Him with all our Heart. Our Being, and all that we have, comes from Him; and even He gave us that whole Heart with which He desires to be loved. Would it not be a great Ingratitude to refuse Him the Heart which He Himself gave us, and that of Purpose that we might have it for Him alone? He lets us enjoy so many Creatures, provided we keep our Heart for Him, which is the only forbidden Fruit.

Is not this the least that God could demand of Man for so many Benefits that He had bestowed on him? And ought not Man of himself to offer unto God his Heart, with all other Things, tho' this

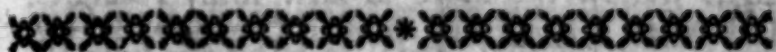
this had not been commanded him? All that we have, or can have, comes immediately from God; and consequently all ought to be offered unto Him voluntarily, and without Constraint. Moreover, on whom can we better bestow our Heart than on God? And who can render it more happy than He? If we bestow it on our Parents, or Friends, they cannot make it happy, even in this World. If we set it on Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, all these Things cannot satisfy it, since they are like Salt-Water; the more our Heart drinks of them, the more it thirsts.

MAN therefore is very ill advised if he place his Affections on any other Thing than God. None but He can satisfy, and make us happy and content: Seeing in God alone is all Sorts of Good, and out of Him all Sorts of Evil.

NEVER rely then upon the Discourses of Men, for they are Liars and Deceivers, and their Glosses are invented only to flatter their own Looseness, and that of others who have no inward Light.

THERE is no Happiness for the Man that loves the Creature, since they cannot make us happy in this World, and far less in Eternity. There is nothing but the Love of God that is lovely and profitable for Man. From hence therefore we must conclude, that it is very possible to love Him; and besides, that it is profitable and necessary, both for our temporal and eternal Happiness.

*In Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, April 20, 1672.*



LETTER VIII.

On the same Subject.

My dear Child,

NEVER suffer yourself to be persuaded, that it is impossible to love GOD with all our Heart, as these Ignorants falsely say; for there is nothing more sweet, more pleasant, more honourable, and more profitable, than to love GOD with all our Heart.

I HAVE experienced, that all Love to the Creatures is bitter, and that the Love of GOD only is sweet and pleasant: For when I loved Riches, they gave me Abundance of Trouble to keep them. When I loved Honours, I found therein many piercing Displeasures, when I was not honoured as much as I desired. So that one Neglect gave me more Trouble, than a hundred Honours gave me Content. When I loved the Delights of this Life, I found therein great Bitterness; for there is none of these Pleasures that brings not its Displeasure along with it. The Pleasures of Taste breed Poverty and Diseases, and they are insatiable; they never satisfy, no more than those of the Flesh, which resemble Salt Water, the more one drinks, the more he is thirsty. I have observed this in many Persons, who (after having ruined their Body, and their Health, in giving Satisfaction to their Concupiscence) used all Sorts of Means to
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cure their Infirmities; and this to the End they might wallow the more in their filthy Pleasures. And when I loved any human Creature, it was always painful for me to please them; and the Fear of offending or losing them, was to me a continual Anxiety. So that there is nothing but God alone, whom it is sweet to love.

ALL other Loves have Grief mingled with their greatest Pleasures. We see young People marry with Joy; there is nothing but Mirth and Dances: But the Wedding is scarce over, when we see them sad and afflicted, pensive and melancholy: Diseases attack, the Care of their Affairs disquiets them, Fortune is against them; their Pleasures are many Ways turned into Sorrows; the Pleasures of Flesh into Pains, those of the Palate into Diseases; Honour into Contempt; even as *Haman's* Pleasure, invited to the Queen's Banquet, when he saw that *Mordecai* would not give him the Honour he desired. Thus all earthly Pleasures end in Sadness.

So that we cannot find any other true Pleasure in this World, but that only of loving God; which is very pleasant, and also honourable. For what Honour is Man capable of, that comes near that of loving so mighty a God; who created Heaven and Earth, and all other Things, and upholds them by his Almighty Power.

If we count it an Honour, that we may love a King, a Prince, or any Person in Authority; how much more should we think ourselves to be honoured, that we may love God? And what Honour is it for a silly Worm of the Earth, such as Man is, that he may love God, who desires to be loved by him; and even expressly commands
him

him to love Him with all his Heart? As if God delighted in the Honour He does to Man, in desiring to be loved by Him. And the Honour of loving God with all our Heart, surpasses all the Honours that Man is capable of in Heaven and Earth.

It is also profitable for him, seeing this Love can make him happy in this World, and to all Eternity. Whereas all the Creatures together cannot procure us either the one or the other. For what Profit can we draw from the Creatures, who cannot give us a Day, yea, an Hour, or a Moment of Life? What could they do then to give us eternal Life?

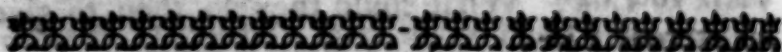
NOTHING but GOD alone can make Man happy, in this Life, and in the Life to come; since all the Advantages that Men can receive from one another, serve but for their Damnation. Their Pleasures withdraw the Soul from God; their Honours cause them to fall into Pride, and their Riches into Avarice, which leads them in the broad Way of Damnation.

BUT so great is their Blindness, that they cannot see those Mischiefs, how evident soever they be. They persuade themselves that their Disquiets are Peace, and their Displeasures Contentments. For how many are there in the World, who study all their Life to perfect themselves in some Science, that they may be esteemed of Men? How many that toil, and travel, and expose themselves to many Dangers, that they may gain a little Money? And how many who expose their Wealth, and even their Lives, to preserve their Honour? Though all these are vain, yet they love and esteem them more than God. For we see

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them not do that for Him, which they do for the Creatures: They render them troublesome and hard Services, and they imagine to themselves, that there is more Difficulty to love God, than to love the World. Nevertheless, *the Love of God is sweet, pleasant, honourable, and profitable.* But the Love of the World is disquieting, sad, without Peace, Honour, or Profit, both for Time, and for Eternity.

In Holstein, near Gottorp-Castle, April 25, 1672.



LETTER IX.

On the same Subject.

My dear Child,

BELIEVE firmly that the Words of *Jesus Christ* are true; to wit, *That his Yoke is easy, and that his Burden is light.* And believe his Counsel, in taking his Yoke, and you shall feel it to be such, if you will take it on you. I experience it daily more and more, and you will experience it too, as I do, if you continue in the Resolution to follow *Jesus Christ*, and to become his true Disciple. I will not promise that you shall have in his Service sensual Pleasures, or worldly Riches: But I promise you assuredly Peace of Conscience, Tranquility of Mind, inward Peace in your Soul. Which are all far more valuable than the vain Pleasures, the impure Satisfactions, and the

the Riches of this World, which can never satisfy our Souls, seeing they are spiritual, and consequently cannot be satisfied with material Things.

THIS is the Reason why there was never any Man perfectly content in this World, unless he loved GOD with all his Heart. None but such can be entirely content: For only the Love of GOD is capable to satisfy our Souls; for they are little Divinities, which cannot meet with full Content out of GOD, from whom they proceeded.

You must labour then to attain this Love: For when you have truly found it, you shall have all Things, and shall reign over the whole World, having in Contempt all that is not GOD. And there is no Need that you use Violence with GOD to obtain his Love, for He gives it freely to all that desire and ask it. And He even compels Men by an expresse Command: But you must do Violence to yourself to obtain this Love; because your Affections are carried to other Things; so you must reclaim them, and constrain them to return to their GOD. And in this you shall have as many Combats, as you have Habits of loving other Things. If then you be strongly wedded to Self-love, or the Love of other Creatures, your Combats will be so much the greater.

BUT the Affair deserves well that we suffer it, seeing afterward we shall enjoy so great a Happiness, both temporal and eternal. We should spare nothing to gain such a Treasure; the Trouble will soon be over, and the Joy shall last for ever. You ought therefore to suffer willingly, that you may withdraw your Affections from earthly Things, and place them upon GOD alone.

I HAVE shewn you, in my last, that this is pleasant, honourable, and profitable. It remains now, that you put it in Practice. Examine what it is that you love besides God, and detest that Love, and withdraw your Heart from it. And if you love Objects that are without you, flee from them, as the Enemies of your Good; loose your Heart from them, and desire no more to see them. And if your Affections be wedded to Self-love, break them off from an Object so little lovely, that you may place them upon God, who merits your Affections, and none but He.

I PROTEST then against this Self-love, and yield not any longer to Nature, but the Things that are purely necessary; for it is your greatest Enemy, which you must not furnish with Arms to fight against yourself. You know corrupt Nature wars against the Love of God, as far as you give Way to it: Give it then as little Satisfaction as you can, 'till you have overcome it; withdraw then your Affections from it. You must restrain it, as a Horse with a Bridle, that it kick not, and that it think of nothing, but to serve the Master whom you love.

THIS is the Way to make you free, that you may love God with all your Heart; for as soon as your Affections shall be withdrawn from all the Creatures, they will be assuredly carried to love God their Creator; for the Love of God is the Element of our Soul, in which alone it can live, and repose itself. This Love of God is the true Center of our Souls, into which they fall of themselves, so soon as they are disengaged of other Affections. It is as with a Stone thrown up into the Air, which will not rest 'till it fall on the Earth, which

which is its Center, unless it be kept up by some other Things.

You must labour in this, that you may break all the Bonds of earthly Affections; and so soon as you feel an Affection for any Thing that is not God, break it off quickly, for it is a Chain that keeps you out of your Element; and though it should be grievous to you to loose your Heart from any Thing to which it inclines; yet this Trouble will quickly change into Consolations; for you shall no sooner return to the Love of God, but you shall bathe in Ease and Pleasure, as a Fish newly return'd to the Water. I know, indeed, it seems grievous to us, that we may not in any Thing follow our natural Inclinations; but if we take on this Yoke for the Love of God, it will become light and easy to us.

THERE is no Body that can excuse himself from bearing it, since our Father, *Adam*, laid it on the Shoulders of all his Posterity. All Men in general, and every one in particular, are charged with the Miseries that Sin has brought upon human Nature. They are all subject to Heat, Cold, Intemperance of the Air, Hunger, Thirst, Infirmities, and Diseases of the Body, to Ignorance and Inconstancy of Spirit, and the disorderly Motions of their Passions; for Sin has brought all these Things upon human Nature, which God created altogether perfect: But since all Men have partaken of *Adam's* Sin, they are all by Consequence subject to his Penitence.

BUT the Miseries of this Life are light and easy, when we receive them from God's Hand, as Marks of his Justice. But the same Miseries, or the same Yoke is very heavy and grievous, when we bear them.

them grudgingly, or seek to be discharged of them. Which cannot be in this Valley of Tears; where we must stay, untill the Time of our Penitence be over. Some have a longer Time assigned them than others, according to the Appointment of the great Judge. But if we will take this Life of Penitence for a Time of Delights and Pleasures, we must do an eternal Penance, which shall never end, and which shall begin even in this Life. For though we should employ all the Industry of our Mind, and all the Strength of our Body, to avoid Sufferings; yet for all this, they would not leave us. And do or say what we will, we must feel Heat, Cold, Sicknes of Body, and Troubles of Mind, Changes of Seasons, Revolutions of Times, and many other Accidents which befall Man, during the Course of his Life. All this must be grievous and painful to him, if he do not take it as GOD's Yoke. But if he embrace it affectionately, as *Jesus Christ* did, all will be light and easy to him; as Miseries, Persecutions, Torments, and even Death itself, were unto our Saviour. Not that his Nature was insensible of the Pains and Torments which they caused Him; but He suffered all for the Love of GOD, which made the most heavy Burdens easy.

If you, my Child, would be his Disciple, and become a true Christian, embrace, as He did, all the Miseries of this present Life; bear patiently all that befalls you, contrary to your own Will; and above all, deny yourself, as *Jesus Christ*, your Captain, taught and practised. Because the Inclinations of corrupt Nature tend always to Greatness, and to receive Honour, He chose Meanness and Contempt; and because they are bent always to covet Riches, He would be poor; and because they seek always their Ease and Pleasure, he chose Uneasiness and Sufferings.

BEHOLD

BEHOLD your Captain who marches before you, and who calls you to follow Him, saying, *He that will come after Me, let him take up his Cross, and deny himself, and follow Me.* You must not seek any other Master, nor hearken to any other Doctrine; for Men deceive, and are deceived, being desirous to take another Way than *Jesus Christ* took; or desiring to enter into eternal Life, by Means quite contrary to those which He used. For if there had been another Way of Salvation, *Jesus Christ* would have taught us it, and would have followed it Himself; since all that He did on Earth, was to give us an Example, that we might imitate Him. If then there were any better Thing than to renounce our corrupt Nature, doubtless He had taught us it. Never imagine then, that Men are too frail to observe the Law of GOD; since they were given us, only because of our Frailty. For if we had been perfect, we should have had no Need of Laws. It is Sin which has brought these Laws upon Man.

YET you must not think that the Laws are evil, for they are very good, and are the true Means of our Salvation. For without them Man had never known his Sins, and had insensibly abandon'd GOD, living without Restraint, worse than a Beast, not feeling nor knowing his own Misery. *Adam* was not ashamed to see himself naked, before GOD called him, asking him, *Adam, where art thou?* Yet he had sinned, and his Wife also, in the Absence of GOD; and lived still freely after their Sin, as they had done before. But so soon as GOD called them, they began to fear, and tremble, and to be ashamed; which made them flee and hide themselves, not daring any longer to appear before Him. The same Effect had the Law of GOD on Mens Minds in *Moses's* Days; for then also they had quite

quite forsaken their God, and lived in a Neglect of their Duties, giving up themselves to all Sorts of Sins, without knowing them. Therefore God would give them a Law, that by it they might know their Sins, and so abstain from them: This Law was made up of Ten Commandments, or Ten Things which they were to observe. It is not a Burden that God laid upon Mens Shoulders, as some ignorant People say, blaspheming God. He gave them no Commands which are impossible to be observed; for these Things ought to be observed in all Times, though they had not been distinctly commanded or forbidden.

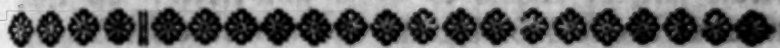
THE Reason why God declares the Things in the Form of Commands, is Man's Infirmary, who had so forgot his Duty, that he committed Evil without knowing it; and he would yet have become worse, if the Law of God had not been given him as a Voice to reclaim him, and to ask him, as He did *Adam, Where art thou?* For without this Law he had not known his Sin.

It is given him as a Light in the Midnight of his Darkness, and as a Medicine for his Evils. But Men call those Mercies, heavy Burdens, yea insupportable to their Frailty; which is a great Ingratitude, and deserves to be punished, and that God should withdraw his Mercies from those stupid Persons; since they turn the Benefit of God's Law, and the light and easy Yoke of the Gospel, into insupportable Burdens, saying, that it is impossible to observe them; and thus they bely the Word of *Jesus Christ, That his Yoke is easy, and his Burden light.*

BELIEVE your Saviour, and do not hearken to these Lyars. Resign yourself to God; embrace
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the Law of the Gospel; and you shall know by Experience *that his Yoke is easy, and that his Burden is light.*

In Holstein, near Gottorp-Castle, 26 April, 1672.



LETTER X.

That we must always advance in Virtue, and never stop.

My dear Child,

NEVER weary in the Service of GOD: The Beginning of it is the most difficult. You know that Rose Bushes bear Thorns before they bear Roses: It is the same as to true Virtue. It begins with Thorns, but beautiful Roses will come in their Season. True Virtue has nothing pricking in it, no more than the Rose; for it is altogether sweet, and beautiful, and fragrant. It give Peace and Pleasure to the Soul; for Peace and Joy are Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

O WHAT Peace and Content has a virtuous Soul! It seeks nothing, fears nothing, and hopes for nothing, but in the Promises of GOD: It rests upon his Providence: It yields itself to be guided sweetly at the Will and Pleasure of the LORD: It is not disquieted nor vexed about any Thing, but waits in Peace how GOD will dispose: It affects nothing, and precipitates nothing, knowing that
Patience

Patience and Long-suffering are the Fruits of the Spirit: It is meek in itself, and toward its Neighbour; for Goodness, Meekness, and Gentleness, are Fruits of the Holy Spirit. A virtuous Soul is always modest and moderate in all its Actions, chaste, content, and full of Charity; because the Holy Spirit produces there all his Fruits, which are sweet and agreeable to God and Men: So that true Virtue is desirable for the Sweetness it has in itself: It is desirable for its Beauty; and all good Men honour and esteem it above all created Things: It can well abide a narrow Search; for the nearer we approach it, the more we discover its Beauty: It is also fragrant, as the Rose; for true Virtue has a sweet Savour in the Nostrils of every one, even of the Wicked, who are often obliged to esteem it, though they will not follow it. And if we hear sometimes well-inclined Persons despise true Virtue, it is because they know it not, and they have been deceived with apparent Virtues.

THEREFORE, my Child, you must endeavour to acquire this beautiful Rose of true Virtue, even though you should feel the pricking of Thorns in gathering it. These Pains will quickly be gone, and the beautiful Rose of true Virtue will never fade. It shall be eternally beautiful, and of a good Savour before God; so you must spare nothing to acquire true Virtue. If you feel Trouble in this, it will turn into Quiet; if you feel Grief, it will change into Joy; if you find Repugnance, it shall be changed into Content. For the Beginning only is difficult.

THE Reason is, because the Devil then uses all Means to divert us from it. He leaves them in Quietness, who have only apparent Virtues; or those who have only good Desires; because he can ensnare

ensnare them at his Pleasure. The First, by a Presumption of their Salvation, because of their seeming Virtues: And the other, by precipitating them into Death, before they have brought their good Desires to Effect; for he knows well, that all Hell is paved with good Intentions. Therefore he leaves all such Persons in Quiet, as well as the Worldlings; knowing well that he shall not miss them at one Time or other, and thus he leads them softly to Hell with a Silken Rope, without vexing or tempting them much.

BUT such as have truly resolved to follow *Jesus Christ*, he labours Night and Day to tempt them, and that by all Means; as well knowing, that he needs no longer pretend to it, when they have attained. They shall then laugh at him, and his Assaults; and therefore he endeavours to shake them at the Beginning, and to make them lose their Heart, considering the Difficulty in acquiring it.

FOR he shews them the Pains they shall meet with in the Mortification of their Senses; then the Impossibility of attaining such Perfection. He represents to them also the Example of others, whom they esteem good Men. For it is enough to them to make a good Out-side, without being at the Trouble to mortify their Senses, or to deny themselves: And the Devil persuades them that this is not necessary for their Salvation.

BEWARE, my Son, of his Deceits, and give no Ear to his Suggestions, nor to the Infirmities of your own Nature; for neither of these can hinder you from attaining Perfection, provided you have a firm Resolution; God will assist you, and will give you all that you need, if you continue faithful to Him.

THIS

THIS is it which *Jesus Christ* intended by the Comparison, *If you had Faith as a Grain of Mustard Seed, you should remove Mountains.* To remove Mountains of Stone and Sand would be no great Marvel, since this would add nothing to our Souls. But He speaks of Mountains of Difficulties which we find in the Acquisition of true Virtue.

BUT if a Soul persevere faithfully in its good Resolution, it will revive by Faith in the Promises of GOD; and will remove all these Mountains of imaginary Difficulties. We no sooner abandon earthly Affections, but we ascend with Ease to true Perfection; for all the Difficulties which we apprehend, are nothing but false Faces, which the Devil has placed as Vizards, to frighten those who begin. But we need not fear; for the Mask being taken off, we find it pleasant and agreeable: And he who has once known it, finds in it afterwards much Peace and Consolation; though the Devil will never cease to tempt and pursue us. He tempted *Jesus Christ*, and pursued Him even to the Desert, whither He had gone by the Conduct of GOD's Spirit.

IT is nothing to feel Temptations, though they should continue all the Days of our Life, provided we do not consent to them. They signify no more than Smoke that vanishes in the Air. It is the Devil's Work to tempt, but Man's to resist it. Therefore St. Peter says, *My Brethren, watch and be sober, for your Adversary the Devil goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; resist him, therefore, steadfast in the Faith.* This he says to teach us, that we must not sleep in the Service of GOD, nor follow our Appetites; but be sober, and watch with Perseverance, for we have an Enemy who never sleeps. We must overcome him by
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the Strength of Faith, which is able to remove the greatest Mountains.

I AM apt to believe that you are burdened with Temptations from the Devil, for he sees that you seek after true Virtue; and so he will not fail to attack you, and so much the more, that you have given him Advantage over your Soul by your past Sins. He will not part with his Fortrefs, but by Force, seeing he has so long been Governor there. You must then drive him out of it by Force: *The Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* Indeed we are the Children of GOD, and consequently the Heirs of his Kingdom; so we have no Need to take that Kingdom by Force. It is given us freely of GOD. But we must use great Force to resist the Devil, and our corrupt Nature, who would rob us of this Kingdom, tho' it belongs to us, as the Inheritance of our heavenly Father: And this is the Reason why He says, *that the Violent ravish it, and that it must be taken by Force.*

NOT that we must fight with Weapons of Iron, to gain this Kingdom; for all the Force of Nature together could not carry it: But we must fight our Enemies with Spiritual Weapons, of which the chief is Faith; seeing it begets Hope and Love, which are the two Bucklers to defend us against all Sorts of Enemies.

FOR he who loves GOD, is afraid of nothing; seeing *Love is strong as Death*, and he that putteth his Trust in GOD shall never be confounded. So that the Devil shall never have Power over him that resists him by the Strength of Faith. Fear nothing then, my Son; persevere in the good Resolution of attaining true Virtue. Set all your Affections to

love GOD, and you shall be strong as Death. Place your Hope in GOD alone, and you shall never be confounded. For having these Weapons, you need not fear the Assaults of your Enemy the Devil. He is as a chain'd Dog, and can go no farther than the Chain of Man's Consent goes. If he come to vex you in the Night, during Sleep, this cannot hurt you; seeing Man does not use his Free-will while he sleeps, which he knows full well: But he comes to vex Man in Sleep, that he may get him to consent (when awakened) to evil Suggestions, which he excited in his Spirit while asleep.

BE ready to lift up your Spirit to GOD as soon as you awake, and then the Temptation shall vanish as Smoke. But if you amuse yourself with revolving in your Spirit the Thing that you dreamed, and take Pleasure in it; then shall you fall into Sin, and consent to the Devil. I advise you therefore never to regard Dreams or evil Thoughts which he represents to you, while asleep, nor even those which he offers you when you awake; for you cannot sin, so long as you take no Pleasure in them, nor consent unto them.

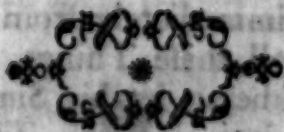
AND though you should be tormented all the Days of your Life with evil Thoughts, this will not make you lose the Grace of GOD, so long as they are displeasing to you. Yet you have Cause to be humbled before GOD, for your former Sins; for if you had never given a willing Entry to evil Thoughts, the Devil would never have had such Power now. But what is past is no longer in your Power. It remains only, that you strive for the Time to come. Continue therefore faithful to GOD, and persevere in the good Resolution you have taken. Never weary in this Search; it well deserves that you endure some Trouble; for even Worldlings

Worldlings endure more in the Service of the World. What Disquiets, Cares, and what Travels, does not a Merchant endure to gain a little Money? What Pains must not a Gentleman take to preserve his Honour? What Toil has the Tradesman to gain Food? Which you have in the Service of GOD without Trouble. Will you not then suffer a little Temptation, that you may attain true Virtue? Which is to buy it at a very easy Rate.

FOR all the Devil can do to you is inconsiderable, in Respect of the Joy that attends you in Heaven. He may disturb you; but he can never make you fall into Sin, unless your own Will consent to it.

BUT you have not yet sufficiently discovered the Wiles of the Old Serpent; nor have you overcome yourself, nor human Respects, which are the Chains that hinder your Flight to GOD. But do not lose Courage: If I have overcome the World, you may overcome it also, and shall become Master of the Devil, and of yourself. GOD is neither partial, nor a Respector of Persons. He bestows his Grace on all that seek and desire it in Truth.

*In Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, the 27th of April,
1672.*



L E T T E R X I .

The Devil, the Enemy of true Virtue, opposes it with all Manner of Devices.

My dear Child,

I SPOKE much to you in my last, of the Temptation of the Devil; because it is as necessary for you to know this in order to your Salvation, as it is to know true Virtue. For if you know only Good, you will easily fall into Evil, without perceiving it; and so through Ignorance you may follow Evil, thinking that you do well. But since I have undertaken to teach you all Things necessary to Salvation, I must also speak to you of the Malice of the Devil, and how he tempts Men to lead them to Perdition; as he has already led many, who let themselves be seduced by him insensibly; though otherwise they were of good Inclinations, yet they were lost by Ignorance.

I ENTREAT you therefore to consider, that all Sorts of Evil come from the Devil, as all Sorts of Good come from God. All that is good, in Heaven, in Earth, in all the Creatures, in all Places, comes immediately from God; and all that is evil in all these Things, comes from the Devil. For he being by his Sin separated from God, is fallen into all Evil. There is no Good but in God alone; and in the Privation of Good consists all Evil.

CONSIDER also, there can be no Evil in God, and there can be no Good in the Devil.

BUT we find this Mixture in the other Creatures, who partake of Good from God, and Evil from the Devil; and so they may have a Mixture of these; and are good or evil, as they partake of the one or the other. God gave unto Man all Manner of Good in Abundance. And the Devil has given nothing to Man but so much Evil, as he has obtained Consent from the Free-will of Man, and no more; and he has several Sorts of Snares, fit for every one's Condition. He spies out the Inclinations of every Man, that he may attack him where he is weakest.

WHEN he sees one inclined to covet Riches, he will give him Prosperity, that his Heart may be wedded to them. If this succeed, he has gained that Man; seeing his Affections cannot be towards God, so long as they are in his Money. Not that the Devil can give Men Riches, for he is but a poor Wretch, who has nothing but Miseries: But he has Power over the Minds of many Men, whom he moves to Labour, or to give Profit to such as he hopes to gain by the Bait of Riches. So that he affords Occasions to make them prosper by his Adherents. Now, they who know not the Wiles of the Devil, think it is the Blessing of God when they so prosper. The Devil so blinds their Understanding, that they discover not that even these Prosperities make them fall into many Sins.

FOR he that is rich, becomes ordinarily proud. He exceeds in Pomp, in Vanity, in delicious Fare, in Sloth, in Luxury, and divers other Excesses, which he could not commit before he was rich.

BUT the Devil is very subtil, and will beware of tempting any by Things contrary to their Inclination. If he see one liberal, and that he does not covet Riches, he will make him exceed in his Liberality; by giving, wasting, and neglecting that which he has Need of himself. If he see another addicted to Luxury, Blasphemies, and Drunkenness, he is often content with some of these Sins, and lets him do well in other Things.

FOR it is enough to the Devil, if he hold us bound by one only Sin, wherein we have placed our Affection. This is enough to shut us out of GOD's Favour, seeing it is not lawful to withdraw our Heart to place it in any other Thing, but in GOD alone. Yet the Devil always incites Men to do all the Evil he can. But there are many who would not give up themselves to many Vices, though they be addicted to one. Such Persons are not much molested by the Devil's Temptations; but he lets them rest quietly in the Sin to which he sees them most addicted, without tempting them by other Things. When the Devil then has no Hope to carry Men to greater Evils, he contents himself to keep their Souls bound by one Chain 'till Death, that he may after drag them with him to Hell. The Misery is, that Men are not aware of this; for they that are not addicted to many Vices, still hope for Salvation.

ONE will say, It is true, I am inclined to Luxury, but I bestow much on the Poor, and will wrong no Man. Another will say, It is true, I am given to Drinking; but I am kind to my Neighbour. A Third will say, It is true, I love Riches and Honours; but I also attend the Service of GOD, I go oft to Church. A Fourth will say, It is true, I am given to Delicacy; but I hate

no Body. And thus they think to obtain Salvation, while they are not addicted to many Vices:

BUT the Devil laughs at all these Excuses. He will have all Sorts of Persons in Hell; such as have committed many Kinds of Sins, and those that are addicted but to one or two. For in Hell there are all Sort of States and Degrees, even as there is in the World; where one is of a higher Quality than another. They who have committed more Sins here, shall be more profoundly damned in Hell, than others. I pray God preserve you from this Misery.

In Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, the 29th of April,
1672.

LETTER XII.

Other Devices of Satan.

My dear Child,

I HAVE not yet sufficiently discovered to you the Crafts of *Satan*, how he tempts spiritual Persons, and those that seek true Virtue. He strives more to gain these, than he does for those of the World. For he leaves such to do as they list, knowing well, that to damn themselves, they need but follow corrupt Nature. For the Corruption of Nature comes from the Devil, and we need but follow it to become compleat Devils; as if we fol-
low

low the Light of God, we shall be little Gods. For both the good and the evil Spirit beget their Like, when united to the Soul of Man.

THEY produce always Fruits of their own Nature. When Man's Will then joins with the Corruption of his Nature, it has within itself that Devil of Corruption, which *Satan* hath engendered there. And when it obeys this Corruption, it obeys the Devil himself. For the Corruption of Nature, and the Wickedness of the Devil, are the same Thing, even as a Man's Child is another Man. Men are grossly ignorant in this. They think they are not tempted of the Devil, when they do not feel in themselves preternatural Evils: And they call the Wickedness of their Nature, a Frailty; without having ever considered from whence this Wickedness proceeds.

GOD never created Evil, but He made Man altogether perfect, and with an Inclination to Good, without knowing any Thing of Evil. Therefore of Necessity, the Wickedness and Inclination to Evil, which Man feels in his Nature, must come from the Devil. So that they who follow the Inclinations of their corrupt Nature, walk peaceably to eternal Damnation. And the Devil does not drive such with the Strokes of Temptations, but he observes them at a Distance only to see them go on, knowing well, that they will still become worse, if they follow simply the Inclinations of their Nature.

WHICH few are aware of, but they will find themselves deceived at Death. For during their Life, they think they do no Evil in following their natural Inclinations: Yea, some say, God created Nature, and He cannot be offended that we follow it.

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This is one of the greatest Temptations, and opens a Door to all Sorts of Evils.

THEREFORE, my Son, you must first die to yourself, if you would attain true Virtue; seeing so long as corrupt Nature is not entirely mortified in you, you cannot live in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*. Because for this you must become a new Creature, and detest that old Corruption which the Devil has thrust into the Works of God: For it is this that is our Enemy, and causes all Sorts of Evil.

YET the Ignorant think themselves happy when they can follow their natural Inclinations, though indeed it is the Source of all Evil. For though God created Nature, and ordained that it should be sustained by Aliments, and also re-produce itself by Generation: Yet He would always have the Heart of Man entirely to Himself, without any Partner.

GOD willingly permits that Man eat, drink, generate, and use his natural Senses, for his Necessity: But it is his Will also that we do not set our Heart or Affections on them, which He requires to be reserved indivisibly for Himself alone! We may therefore use all these Things, but we ought not to fix our Hearts upon them.

FROM all this we see, that what served Man for a Blessing, when he was in Grace, serves him now for a Mean of sinning, and losing the Grace of God. Yet we find Men so blinded with Self-love, that they persuade themselves they may see, hear, smell, taste, and feel all that is good and pleasant, and in the mean while praise God; which is a Falshood. For since Man's Nature was corrupted, it no longer refers any Thing to God; but in all these Things pleases

pleases itself, and uses them as if it were worthy of them, as it was before Sin. But this is a gross Error: For corrupt Nature cannot seek the Glory of GOD; it seeks only its own Glory, and has no Intention to bless and praise GOD for what it possesseth. This Desire of satisfying the natural Senses is common to all those who live according to corrupt Nature; none excepted.

THEREFORE they who say, that they can use all that is good and pleasant, and praise GOD in them, do but flatter themselves. For to do this, one must have overcome corrupt Nature; which they have not yet done, since we see them search after pleasant Things for their own Satisfaction. But if they had overcome corrupt Nature, they would no longer satisfy it in any Thing. For this Corruption is not so mortified, but it will revive, if we grant to Nature its Ease and Pleasures. But the Soul that is regenerated in *Jesus Christ*, knows well, that it must keep its Nature under Restraint, during this short Life, which is a State of Penitence, where we must suffer, if we would enjoy afterwards. Which shews, that they who say *they can enjoy all good and beautiful Things here, praising GOD*, are very ignorant, and deceived by the Devil. For they think they are regenerated in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*; which is false; since his Spirit does not teach that we should use all that is pleasant: But He teaches to deny ourselves, to quit all that we possess, and to be sober and watch. All this is not to enjoy whatever is pleasant. For *Jesus Christ* teaches to take the least, and to choose the lowest Place. If then these Persons had contracted ever so little of the Spirit of *Christ*, they would be far from saying, that they have overcome the Corruption of their Nature, and are regenerated in the Spirit

Spirit of *Christ*; while they do Things quite contrary to what He did and taught.

FOR if it were permitted to the Regenerate to take their Pleasure, and to enjoy whatever is pleasant in Nature; doubtless *Jesus Christ* would have done so; since there was never any Person regenerated, and who had overcome the Corruption of Nature, so perfectly as He: And yet He speaks of nothing, but of suffering, becoming poor, bearing the Cross, and denying Himself. These inconsiderate Persons must imagine they are more perfect than He; since they say, that it is lawful for them to taste all that is pleasant in Nature, provided they thank God.

NEVERTHELESS our LORD deprived Himself of all these Things, to give us an Example. Do you not see that this is a cunning Device of *Satan*, that he may deceive those who aspire unto Virtue? For he fills their Spirit with Presumption, as soon as he has got them to digest some fine Speculations of the spiritual Life. They imagine that they are already regenerate by the Spirit of *Christ*, though yet they live altogether according to Nature; such Persons are very far from true Virtue, and it is to be feared they will never attain it, since they think they have reached it already: But they are far from it; and better they had never begun to be virtuous, than to take up with false Virtues. These Sinners are worse than others, because of their Hypocrisy. They think themselves virtuous, and they are yet full of Vices. I despair more of these seeming devout Persons, than of the Men of the World, who have any Fear of God; for so they have the Beginning of Virtue, which the others have not, for they cannot fear God, when they believe they are regenerate in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*; they imagine

gine they have Assurance and are secure, and they are in the Midst of Perils and Hazards, by Presumption, and the Delusion of the Devil.

IF the new Beginner rests in the first Consolations, he is lost. The Reason is, that he will not mind to resist the Corruption of his Nature; but will think he has already overcome it, since he feels a Delight in spiritual Things, whereas he felt none but in natural Things.

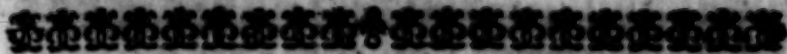
THIS makes him believe that he is already at the Height of Perfection, though he has not yet gone up the first Step; which are the Tears of Penitence and Sorrow for having offended GOD, and the Desire to walk henceforth in his Fear, which is the Beginning of all Virtue.

GOD bestows Sweetness and Consolations on those who begin, to take them off the more easily from earthly Affections, and to draw them to his Love: But we must not rest on them, or on any Thing that is not GOD. But our whole Heart ought to be taken up in the Love of GOD only.

In Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, May 1, 1672.



LETTER



LETTER XIII.

On the same Subject.

My dear Child,

I HAVE not as yet discovered to you all the Devices of the Devil; nay, it is impossible for me to discover them all: But I shall tell you more of them, which I have experienced myself, and such as I have seen in others.

You must know then after what Manner he deals with spiritual Persons, otherwise he might seduce you, without your knowing it. For he transforms himself into an Angel of Light, and does in us almost the same Things which the Spirit of God does: He gives Light to our Understanding, and makes it conceive mystical Things; for he was an Angel of God, and so knew his Will, but did not practise it: He attempts to cause Men to do the very same: He does not hinder them to read mystical Things, and to take Pleasure in them: He even makes them curious to understand them, that they may learn to talk finely of them; but he hinders them with all his Might from putting them in Practice; for he well knows it is written, *He who knows the Will of his Father and does it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.*

I KNEW one Man, who spoke as divinely as an Angel from Heaven could do; and when I heard him

him at first, I thought I had found another Self, and I remained several Years in this Opinion; for I had never heard any speak so profoundly of the inward and mystical Life, as he; but at length he discovered to me that all was but Hypocrisy, which I could hardly believe, because of the good Opinion I had of Him: So I asked him, where he had learned those profound Secrets, seeing he had not studied nor understood *Latin*? He answered, That he was ambitious to be esteemed of Men; and he observed that Virtue was esteemed amongst good Men, and so he conceived that by learning it he should be in Esteem with such Persons. He was modest, walk'd among Men without regarding them: He was always the first at Church: He gave liberally to the Poor, and would sometimes strip himself to cover some wretched Body that he saw naked: He eat and drank soberly: He was sincere and true in his Words: He professed to be in continual Communion with God. And with all these fine seeming Virtues, he was by Compact bound to the Devil, as he himself acknowledged several Times at the End of his Life; and died enraged, renouncing God, and calling on the Devil.

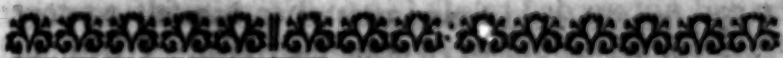
BEHOLD how Men deceive themselves, in believing those to be virtuous, who can talk well of Virtue. The Devil himself teaches his Adherents to talk well of it. For this Man told me, that the Devil incited him to buy many good Books, as *Thaulerus*, *Johannes de Cruce*, and other good mystical Authors, that by reading them he might speak like them, and by such Discourses procure the Esteem of being enlightened by God. Nevertheless this Light came from the Devil; which befalls also many others, who are but Beginners, even without their perceiving it: And the Design is, to

make

make them stop at these fine Speculations of Divine Things.

THEREFORE, my Child, never be curious to know much, nor yet to be able to talk well of Virtue; but be desirous to practise well what you know: For GOD will call you to an Account of it; seeing to whom much is given, of him much shall be required. Be faithful to the first Light that GOD gives you, and He will give you more.

In Holstein, near Gottorp-Castle, May 8, 1672.



LETTER XIV.

On the same Subject.

My dear Son,

IN my former, I have represented to you, how the Devil tempts Men many Ways. But I am afraid lest he catch you yet by another Sort of Temptation; which you could not discover, if you were not forewarned. It consists in this, that when you have well considered the Power and Wiles of the Devil, you will not lay the Blame upon the Devil instead of yourself. For the Heart of Man is so proud, that he will not confess his Fault, and therefore seeks for the Cause of his Sins without himself. This you will do the rather, because I have shewn, that all Evils come from the

Devil, and all Good from God. But though this be most true, we must not therefore imagine that the Devil of himself can force us to do Evil: For he has no Power over our Souls, Hearts, and Wills, but so much as we give him. The Devil may represent Evil to our Spirit, and incite our Wills to follow it; but he can never force us, so long as our Will remains firmly resolved not to consent to Evil.

GOD knew that *Job's* Heart was resigned to his holy Will, and that he offered himself up continually to Him, to be proved in what Manner it pleased Him; and GOD permitted the Devil to tempt him. If the Devil had had Power over Man, he had not needed to ask GOD's Permission to tempt *Job*; for he would have done it of himself, without any Permission.

BUT he has no Power over Man, but what Man himself gives him. Besides, GOD can never do any Evil to Man, nor permit any to befall him, without the Consent of his own Will. So, if we commit Sin, or are damned, it is of our own Will; for GOD can never damn any, without doing the greatest Evil that ever was: Which cannot proceed from GOD, for He can do no Evil. But it is our Sins that damn us, and not GOD; for if there were no Sin, there would be no Damnation; and Sin depending on Man's Will, we must not attribute our Damnation, either to GOD, or to the Devil: Seeing GOD gives us always Grace to save us; and the Devil has no Power to damn us.

So that Man alone is truly blameable for the Sins that he commits: And we ought never to lay the Blame on the Devil, for he cannot hurt us, without our own Consent. He may bark, as
chained

chained Dogs do; but he cannot bite, unless we come near him. He may indeed afflict our Body, or our Spirit, when we desire to have our Souls purged by Sufferings.

THEN GOD permits him to tempt us, by Things that will be most for our Salvation. As He permits the Devil to bring Poverty on a good Man, when He sees that this World's Goods would make him forget himself. GOD loving his Soul, takes his Riches from him, as the Occasions of his Damnation. Sometimes also He deprives him of Honour, or Health, lest these Things should hinder the Perfection of his Soul. It is not always the express Will of Man that these Things should be taken from him; but when GOD takes them, it is always with Man's Will indirectly.

FOR Example: A Person desires not to be poor, or afflicted, or sick; but he desires that GOD may send him every Thing that is necessary for his Salvation: And GOD regarding this, removes from him whatever may hinder him in the Advancement of Salvation. And this is a fatherly Love which GOD bears to Man, and not a Punishment, as the natural Sense takes it, and complains of it; but it is truly what the Person desired in the Bottom of his Soul; to wit, Things that were for his Salvation.

BECAUSE He created Man altogether free, he cannot be compelled either to Good or Evil: Neither by GOD, nor by the Devil, who can never cause Man to sin, unless it be his Will either expressly or indirectly. But Men do not always know the indirect Will they have to do Evil, and therefore they imagine it is the Devil that makes them

sin against their own Will. But this is only an Excuse for their Sins.

It is true, the Devil can tempt Man against his Will, but he cannot make him sin against his Will. He may disorder his Spirit, and make him remember what he ought to forget, and forget what he ought to remember: But if the Person be upon his Guard, and will not do Evil, he will easily discover that this comes from the Devil, being against his own Will; and will have Recourse to GOD by continual Prayer, which *Christ* has so recommended to us, as necessary for our Salvation. Since we have continually an Enemy to fight against, we have Need of Arms continually to defend ourselves; and this will be necessary all the Days of our Life.

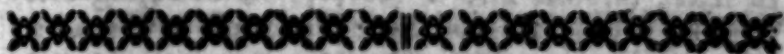
THUS the Apostle advises us, *To pray without ceasing*; because we have always Need of GOD's Help against the continual Assaults which the Devil gives us.

ALL human Wisdom is not able to discover all the Subtilties of the Devil, who being a most subtil Spirit, surpasses the Capacity of Man's Spirit.

He must therefore of absolute Necessity use continual Prayer, that he may discover the Temptations of the Devil, which he cannot know without a Divine Light; and far less is he able to withstand them, without GOD's Assistance; whom he ought continually to invoke, and call upon for Help, without Intermission; seeing the Devil never sleeps, and watches for us when we sleep. But the Strength of Faith can make us overcome the Devil, though he should tempt a Man with all his Might, during his whole Life.

THESE Temptations serve only for greater Virtues to Man, because he passes the Time of his Trial in testifying his Faithfulness to God, while he does not consent to the Temptation which the Devil sets before him.

Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, May 13, 1672.



LETTER XV.

On the same Subject.

My Son,

ISEE yet one Difficulty which occurs to your Spirit; to wit, How you shall discover when the Devil insinuates himself into your good Actions.

It is easy to discern this, provided you have an absolute Will to resist the Devil. It is then most easy to discern if it be the good or evil Spirit, that moves us in all our Actions and Words, to do or say any Thing, small or great; because these two Spirits have quite contrary Dispositions. So that you may as it were feel with your Finger, if it be a good or evil Spirit that moves you to do or say any Thing, by the Dispositions which you shall feel in your Soul.

FOR the good Spirit produces in our Souls,
Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Long-suffering,
Goodness,

Goodness, Benignity, Meekness, Chastity, Faith, Continence, and Modesty. And on the contrary, the evil Spirit produces these Self-love, Impatience, Rashness, Wickedness, Fretting, Pride, Despair, Intemperance, Inconstancy, and Impurity. And as the Tree is known by its Fruit, so we may discover the evil Spirit by the Fruits which he produces. Therefore we must always examine, if our Enterprizes, or the Resolutions we have to do or leave undone any Thing, produce in our Souls Charity, Joy, Peace, &c. and then we may be assured, that our Undertakings and Resolutions are of God, seeing they bring us the Fruits of his Spirit.

THE Devil gives only seeming and outward Joys, which afflict the Heart as soon as they are over: This is the Reason why we see worldly Persons still seek for new Diversions; yet without finding true Contentment in any; which we cannot have but by the Joy of the Holy Spirit. So that it is very easy to discover, if it be the good or evil Spirit, which dwells in our Souls, by the Dispositions and Operations which we feel in them.

WHEN therefore we desire to do or say any Thing, that we may know if it comes from God, see what Disposition that Desire brings in the Soul; if it be in Peace, and if it wait for the Effect with Patience and Long-suffering. For this is a Sign that the Spirit of God has given us that Desire, and that it is his Will we bring it to Effect. But if this Desire mars our Peace, and disturbs our Spirit with Impatience, and strives to precipitate us before the Time; it is a Sign that this comes from an evil Spirit: Or if the Thing, or the Desire, be good in itself, it is a Sign that the Devil insinuates himself into this good Work. However,

we must not cease to do or say what is good in itself; but we must be on our Guard, that we suffer not the Devil to insinuate himself in it: We must then use continual Prayer for God's Help, and Strength to overcome the Temptation that the Devil gives us, while we are doing Good.

We must then never cease from doing good Works, because of the Temptations of the Devil; for he would be well pleased still to hinder them, if he could. But we must examine well the inward Disposition of our Souls, to discover if the Devil does not insinuate himself therein, that we may always purify our Intentions, and hinder the Devil from getting any Advantage by them.

AND therefore we must alway be upon our Guard, and watch against so powerful an Enemy, who attempts to surprize us in all our Actions, both good and indifferent, that he may render them all evil. Therefore we must study well to discern the good Spirit from the evil; which we may do, seeing there are sure Marks whereby to know them. Never say then, that you know not if it is God or the Devil who moves you to do or omit any Thing; but rather acknowledge, with Humility of Heart, that you are not vigilant and diligent enough to discover that evil Spirit, who binds your Understanding, that you may not know him.

FOR you never speak a Word, nor do an Action, wherein you may not discern whether it comes of God, or of the Devil, provided you reflect seriously upon yourself. But the Misery is, that we are distracted and strayed from ourselves; and the Devil makes us forget what we ought to remember, and puts in our Mind that which we ought

ought to forget, that he may bring Confusion in all our Behaviour.

MARK this, and you will find by Experience, that it is but too well grounded. For since the Devil can no longer make you fall into manifest Sins, he endeavours to make you contradict the Spirit of God, which you do not yet well know. You have indeed resolved in the general to follow Him, as you have done in abandoning the World, in loosing your Affections from earthly Goods, and desiring to follow *Jesus Christ* in his Humility. All this proceeds from the Spirit of God, who has governed you in the most important Things, and the Devil could not hinder it.

BUT now he attacks you in small Things, and Things of little Importance, that he may hinder your doing the Will of God in every Thing; and often he gains your Will, to make it contrary to the Will of God in common Things.

THE Devil makes you forget this, and raises in you a Spirit of Contradiction, to which your Nature is also inclined. This is the Reason, that you do not sufficiently discover that it is the Devil; you impute it to your natural Inclinations, which yet is not so, though it mingle itself with the Inclination of the Devil. It is his Custom, to follow one's natural Inclination, to cover himself the better.

AND by this Device, he remains unknown, every one attributing his Fault to his Nature. One excuses his Anger, another his Moroseness, and another his Lust; saying, I cannot help these Things, for it is my Nature.

THIS is a Language that the Devil hears gladly, because thereby he lurks unknown. But they who esteemed the Wickedness of the Devil to be but natural Infirmities, shall perceive clearly at Death, that it was the Wickedness of the Devil which mingled itself with every one's Inclinations. Now the Devil labours always to discover these Inclinations, that he may play his Game the better, and may remain unknown under this Cover of natural Infirmities.

AND thus he amuses many. They never think it is the Devil, because he is so straitly united to their natural Inclinations; and this is his Subtily. He knows well, that he would not be so much obeyed, if he gave Temptations contrary to natural Inclination; and therefore he follows every ones Temper, and increases the Inclinations that he finds in their Nature. If he meet with a cholerick Person, he stirs him up the more to Anger; if with a lustful or melancholy, he increases their Luxury or Sadness; that he may gain them all by their weak Side. He does as an Enemy that would attack a City; he will not assault it where it is fortified, but where it is weakest: If he find some Corner of the Wall broken, he endeavours to break it more, that by it he may enter the Town.

THE Devil cannot surprize us in Things wherein we are upon our Guard, and therefore he attacks us where we do not expect him; and by this Means he easily gains our Will, and makes it obey him in what we have an Inclination for.

You may also remark the Qualities of the Things which the Devil makes us do. For if you will examine yourself narrowly, you will always find in your Words something untrue or dissembled,

dissembled, or spoken to please Men; which makes that there is not always Justice in your Words. For he that speaks by the good Spirit, is true at the Bottom, and never speaks any Thing to please or flatter Men; but declares the Truth of Things, as well what is contrary to himself, as for his Advantage; seeing he seeks to please GOD alone.

To know if our Actions be excited by the Devil or not, mark if they be done for GOD's Glory, or for your own. For the Devil will always stir us up to seek ourselves in all that we do. He knows well that Self-love hinders the Love of GOD, and so he excites us to consider, if what we do or say will be for our Advantage, if it shall give us Pleasure, Honour, or Profit; and when we observe none of these, he slackens our Courage, that we may not accomplish our Undertaking.

THE good Spirit, on the contrary, incites always to labour for the Glory of GOD, and the Assistance of our Neighbour; and so he that is guided thereby does nothing for his own Interest, but endeavours to his Power to assist his Neighbour; because Charity, which that good Spirit brings, watches more for the common than for its own particular Good.

*In Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, the 15th of May,
1672.*

L E T T E R XVI.*On the same Subject.**My dear Son,*

I SEE you are grieved, because the Devil has Power to tempt Men so many Ways; but you ought to rejoice while you learn the Truth of every Thing; for if you knew it not, the Devil would seduce you by Ignorance, as he has done so many Thousands, who have obeyed him because they did not know it. They thought to do the Will of God, and they did that of the Devil, and so perished insensibly.

FOR before God, Ignorance does not excuse Sin; every one is obliged to know what he ought to do and avoid, that he may attain to Salvation.

WHAT should we say, if we saw a Man oppressed with his Enemies, who yet would not be at the Pains to seek Deliverance, and would sleep at his Ease, tho' he knew himself to be surrounded by his Enemies? We should certainly say, this Man is the Cause of his own Misery, and of all the Evils that befall him.

AND why do we not likewise conclude, that he who neglects to search for the Means of his Salvation, and to discover the Wiles of the Devil, his Enemy, is the Cause of his own Damnation? It

can only be imputed to ourselves, seeing we have abundant Means to find, if we had a real Desire to search. What Cause of Ignorance can a Christian pretend, who reads and hears the Instructions of *Jesus Christ*, and his Apostles? They teach, that there is *a Devil who is our Enemy, and who seeks to devour us; That our Life is a continual Warfare; That we must fast and watch, that we enter not into Temptation.* Nevertheless, Men will neither do the one nor the other; but live in Ease, secure amidst their Enemies.

AND which is strange, when any would awaken them out of this lethargick Sleep, they are grieved and dissatisfied. Nevertheless this Sleep will assuredly procure them eternal Death, if they do not awake to fight their Enemies.

AND therefore you ought to rejoice, rather than be sorrowful, that God permits me to discover to you the Wiles of the Devil. For you cannot make him not to be wicked, no more than you can hinder him from tempting Men, since our first Parents gave him that Power; and tho' they had not done it, we give him daily the same Power over us, which he got over them, by our Consent to his Temptations.

THIS being so, we must fight, or render ourselves to him, which were lamentable; for we were created true Children of God, after his Image and Likeness; and we should become by our Sloth the Children of the Devil. This you must never suffer; but endeavour to discover the Evil, and resist it to your Power; and bless God also, that He sends you his Light, that ye may know it, and beware of it.

TEMPTATIONS purify the Soul, and render it agreeable to God. He takes Pleasure to see us fight his and our Enemies; and He gives us Strength and Aid, if we persevere constantly. Moreover, He prepares us triumphant Laurels, and eternal Rewards for the Victory.

THE Grief which you conceive, because the Devil has Power to tempt you and others, comes from him. He makes us always desire Things impossible, that he may afflict and discourage us. For he knows well, that a grieved and discouraged Person is not fit to resist his Temptations; and that he can easily lead one in this State from one Evil to another. And therefore he often causes vain Grievs, such as that which you now feel; and also the disturbing Grief for our past Sins, which are no longer in our Power.

THESE are the Extremities into which the Devil attempts to make us fall. It is true, we ought to regret that we have voluntarily given the Devil so much Power to tempt us; and we ought yet more to lament our past Sins: But we must not therefore rest in these Grievs, seeing they would hinder the Graces of God in us. It is better to go to God by Love and Amendment of Life, than by Melancholies, which proceed from the Devil; since before him, there was nothing but Joy in the World, and in the Heart of Man.

So that Sadness is truly a Quality of the Devil; and therefore Man ought to despise it, if he seek after true Virtue.

HE ought indeed to have a sincere Regret in his Heart for having offended God, and beg Pardon of Him as often as he remembers his Sins; but he

ought never to suffer himself to be overcome of Grief, since what is past is not in his Power; and though he should destroy himself, he can never make that what is past should not be.

He ought then, for Penitence for his past Sins, to endeavour a true Conversion to God, departing from Evil to do Good, detesting Sin to embrace true Virtue: Which is a Contrition much more solid than Tears and immoderate Grief.

THIS you must beware of, my Child, for God would be served with a joyful Heart; and *He deals with the converted Sinner, as if he had never offended Him.* You should rejoice then for the Grace God has given you to forsake the World, and to turn from Vanity to the Truth.

OUR Nature is so feeble and corrupt, that it could not remain faithful to God, without Tribulations; for usually it forgets itself in Prosperity. We see daily among Men, that he who prospers becomes great and proud, and settles himself in the World as in an abiding Place; and that on the contrary, he who is in Adversity, becomes humble, and has Recourse to God. I speak of such as are well-meaning, for to the Wicked all turns to Evil: If they prosper, they offend God the more; and if they are in Adversity, they blaspheme and despair.

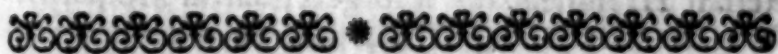
PERHAPS when you were in the World you loved your Mistresses Favours or Colours; shew now that you have chosen *Jesus Christ* for your Lover; love and carry willingly his Colours; esteem as Favours all the Temptations which come; for *Jesus Christ* was cloathed all the Days of his Life with Temptations and Sufferings, both
from

from Devils and Men. You must then wear his Livery, if you will be his Servant.

It is a good Sign that you perceive and feel the Temptation ; for many do not feel it, and so follow it in every Thing.

WOULD you willingly be seized with that Lethargy? And would you wish that the Devil should tempt you no more? That would be an evident Sign that he held you as his own; for he tempts but little the Persons who calmly do his Will: He leaves such in Quiet, and they are well pleased that they are not vexed with Temptations. They imagine themselves to be in a good State, though in Effect they be in the greatest of all Temptations.

Holstein, near Gottorp-
Castle, May 29, 1672.



LETTER XVII.

On the same Subject.

My dear Child,

I PERCEIVE it appears somewhat difficult to you, to watch so narrowly over all your Words and Actions. But believe me, if you do it not, the Devil will certainly surprize you, and you will obey him without knowing it. For he is a most subtil Spirit, who still watches, and never rests. It is necessary therefore to resolve absolutely for the

the Combat, if you would obtain Salvation. For without fighting, there is no Victory; and unless you apply your Spirit to watch diligently over all your Words and Actions, you shall fall into all Sorts of Evil.

FOR this Reason Negligence is a capital Sin. But we must not think those commit the Sin of Negligence, who do not labour bodily; but all those who neglect to watch over their Souls; seeing such neglect their eternal Happiness, and consent tacitly to the Devil's Temptations. This is the Reason why this Sloth is a capital Sin, and ought to be called mortal, since it causes Death to the Soul.

FOR he who through Negligence does not resist the Devil, leaves his Soul to him for a Prey. And he who searches not diligently for all Means to find Virtue, will never obtain it, and never come to eternal Happiness.

FOR we are not come into this World to rest; but to care, to watch, and to labour for our Salvation. We must not therefore change the Order of God. He hath sent us into this World, as into a Place of Banishment, or Penitence; and we forsooth would live here in Ease, without Care and Diligence, and without watching against our Enemies. And yet worldly Persons watch Day and Night to gain a little Money, or to acquire Honour, or infamous Pleasure.

BELIEVE me, Son, these Worldlings shall rise up against us in the Day of Judgment, and upbraid us, that they watched, and cared, and laboured in the Service of the World, more than we have done in the Service of God.

Is it just then, that you should complain of a little Difficulty you have to watch over your Words and Actions, that you may discover the Wiles of the Devil, and find the Means to attain true Virtue? This is the least Thing a Christian ought to do to attain eternal Happiness. For Man is created for no other End but for this Eternity. If then he is capable (as it appears he is) to watch and labour for Things temporal; how much more ought he to do the same, that he may attain Life eternal?

We see Merchants go over Sea and Land, and put their Life in Hazard to gain a little Money. We see Tradesmen toil and sweat, and do even mean and nasty Works, to gain their poor Nourishment. We see hired Servants obedient to the Will of their Masters, and watch and perform diligently the Services they must render them, to gain a small Hire.

AND a Christian will not do these Things, to keep himself out of the Snares of his Enemy, and to acquire true Virtue, which guides his Soul to eternal Life. Would it not be a great Weakness to say, that it is difficult to watch always over our Words and Actions, that we may be well-pleasing to God, while we see Men do the same Thing, upon Accounts that no Way deserve it?

How much Care does a faithful Servant take to serve his Master well? He studies Night and Day to do what is agreeable to him; he performs diligently what he knows to be his Will; and when he has served him well, he obtains nothing but temporal Wages.

I HAVE heard a Story of a Servant, who had faithfully served a Prince, so that he was well satisfied

fied with him; and therefore promised to give him whatever he would ask of him. It happened that the Servant fell sick, and was like to die; when he felt himself in Extremity, he begg'd earnestly for a Visit from his Prince; who being come to his Bed-side, asked what he desired of him. The Servant begg'd that he might not die, and that he might live for some Years. But the Master told him that was not in his Power, and he must ask something else. After this, the Servant begs one Year's Life, or one Month's, and at last one Day's Life only. But the Prince continues to tell him, that he could not give him what he asked, seeing it was not in his Power; and that he must ask of him Money, Physick, Places, or other Things that were in his Power. But the Servant replied, that he needed neither Money, nor Places, nor Physick, which could not prolong his Life for one Day; and that he begg'd of him the Assurance of his Salvation, since he could not prolong his Life; that if he must die, he might at last die in Peace, and with Assurance to be saved. This Demand afflicted the Prince very much, and he told him that his Salvation depended upon the Grace of GOD, and consequently it was not in his Power to promise it to him, and far less to give it.

THIS grieved the Servant so, that turning away from his Prince, and turning his Face to the Wall, he said, *O Wretch that I am! Have I past all my Life in serving a Master, who is not able to assist me in my greatest Need? Not so much as to give me one Hour's Life; I will not henceforth serve so impotent a Master.* And in this Resolution he made a Vow to GOD, *That if He should restore him his Health, he would serve GOD only, and attend the Perfection of his Soul; and so give himself to a Lord who could give him Life and Salvation.*

WHICH

WHICH he did indeed; for God having restored him to Health, he for some Years led a good Life, and in the End died well.

DOES not this Story open your Understanding, to perceive the Blindness of Men, who spare nothing in the Service of the World, but bestow therein their Cares and Labours, to please Men, such as themselves, or to gain a little earthly Goods?

Holstein, near Gottorp-Castle.

LETTER XVIII.

On the same Subject.

My dear Child,

SPIRITUAL Diligence is the most necessary of all Virtues, without which you cannot persevere in any Virtue; and the Devil will always endeavour to make you lose them by Degrees, if you keep not firmly that of Spiritual Diligence.

For if he see that you have obtained Humility, he will excite Occasions of Pride, as the Praises of Men, Prosperity in temporal Goods, and such like, to make you lose that Humility. Be always on your Guard then, with Spiritual Diligence, otherwise you shall lose Humility, ere you be aware.

WHICH happened to me; for after that God had given me the Virtue of Humility, I felt Pride arise

arise again in my Heart: I felt a Dissatisfaction when Men did not give me Honour, but call'd me by my simple Name: And though I discovered nothing of it outwardly, my Humility was notwithstanding weakened inwardly.

So that if God had not given me Spiritual Diligence, to watch continually over my Soul, I had assuredly lost my Humility, as also my voluntary Poverty. For after that I was entirely disengaged from coveting this World's Goods, and had actually forsaken them, I felt covetous Thoughts for many Years. For some pious Persons desired me to put some Money in Fellowship with them in their Trading, which I did with an Intention to bestow all the Gain upon the Poor. After I had taken this Resolution, I began to argue with myself, if it would not be enough to leave them Half of the Gain, and keep the rest for myself?

BUT when I examined my Conscience with Spiritual Diligence, I discovered that the Devil intended thereby to make me relapse into coveting the Goods which I had abandoned. This happened to me also many Years after, on a Time when I was at *Malines* about some Affair, I took a Fancy to buy some Laces (for they are made there in Abundance) with a Design to sell them at *Lisle*, and so save the Expence of my Voyage. After I had bought them, and saw Appearance of Gain, I thought I might keep that Gain to myself; though I was then in an Hospital, which I had undertaken to govern out of Charity, and to employ all my Labour for the Advantage of poor Children.

THUS the Devil endeavours always to surprize us by subtil Snares, unless we remain firmly fixed in Spiritual Diligence. For though it seems often
that

that our Actions are reasonable, and for a good End; yet the Devil slips in, and attempts to get his Advantage. And when he cannot gain much, he contents himself with little; but yet he always does some Hurt to the Perfection of our Souls, or that of others.

So that we must be diligent, that we may hinder him from gaining any Thing. Now he can do us no Hurt, when we perceive it, and have our Will fixed in God. For when we discover the Snares of the Devil, we shall assuredly resist him; but if we fall into Spiritual Negligence, he will ensnare us in all Things. And I believe we shall not speak a Word, from which the Devil will not draw some Advantage against our Souls, or those of others. For he will make us be silent of what we ought to speak for our spiritual or temporal Advancement, and for the Good and Edification of our Neighbour.

We must not say (as many Ignorants) that *Christ* has satisfied all for us; seeing he exhorts us to seek the Kingdom of Heaven, to pray, to knock, and to do all that we can to obtain it: Teaching thereby that this Spiritual Diligence is necessary to Salvation.

So our LORD admonishes us, *To watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation.* Now if the Merits of *Christ* had thus satisfied all, what Need should we have to watch and pray? We needed but to remain in Ease and Quiet.

THEN we needed not to do any Thing. For it would be in vain to knock, and pray, and seek, if all were in *that* Sense obtained by the Merits of *Christ*. This may let you see, my Son, that Men are now abandoned to the Spirit of Error, and that they

they know not the Truth of Things: For they make one another believe Falshoods for Truths; and would by their Glosses annul the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles.

Now this excites continually to Spiritual Diligence, seeing *Christ* says, *We must pray always*. We must always be diligent to watch over all our Words and Actions: Otherwise we shall not speak a Word without committing a Sin, nor do any Action that shall not be defiled; to wit, so long as we live in corrupt Nature, in which we are born. For this Corruption loving itself, turns to its own Glory and Profit all that we say and do.

THIS is a continual Sin, which we cannot avoid, but by Spiritual Diligence, or continual Prayer, which is the same. For being continually attacked by Sin, we must continually combat it, or yield ourselves its Slaves. And tho' there were no other Devil but the Corruption of Man's Nature, we ought notwithstanding to resist it continually; seeing that Corruption is as much the Enemy of our Salvation as the Devil.

If you would examine yourself, you would find by Experience, that you do not so much as one Action, (how good soever in itself) which is not defiled with Self-love and Self-seeking; and that you speak not one Word, which you aim not for your own Advantage or Praise, or to excuse and justify yourself.

FOR Self-love seeks always its own Ease and Satisfaction, and will not have the Blame in any Thing. It would appear innocent in the grossest Faults which it commits: It speaks to excuse them, reasons to maintain its Opinions, or what it has fancied

fancied or undertaken to maintain. In short, it employs all the Powers of the Body and the Spirit to disown its Guilt. So proud is this corrupt Nature, that it will not be blamed in any Thing, if it can avoid it.

Now all these Things are manifest Sins, which shut out of our Hearts the Love of God, that we may love and esteem ourselves; and so break the Command, of *Loving God with all our Heart*,

Hufum, Jan. 27,

1674.



LETTER XIX.

Spiritual Diligence is necessary to Salvation.

My dear Child,

I CANNOT say enough to you of the Necessity of spiritual Diligence, since it must occasion your eternal Salvation, and all the good Things we attain in this Life, and in that which is to come.

WEIGH well this Necessity, that you may lay Hold on it, and put it in Practice. For tho' you had acquired many other Virtues, yet the Devil could easily ensnare you by spiritual Negligence, and let you do well for one Time, that he may ensnare you at another.

He could not hinder you to forsake the World, that you might give yourself to the Service of God, since this was your absolute Resolution; neither could he hinder you from detesting Sin, and undertaking to follow true Virtue. But he waits for you in the Passage, that he may stop your Course, and hinder your Perseverance by divers Temptations. He will stir up Men of Good-will to raise Suspicions of your Resolution, and that even upon pious Pretexts. He will make you sometimes doubt, if you should not do better to remain in the World, and make your Light shine to others. At another Time he will represent to you, if you had not better Trade yet, that you might assist your Neighbour out of your Superfluity, or by your good Example.

FOR the Devil tempts by all Sorts of Means, and when he cannot make us fall into Sin by evil Actions, he insinuates himself into our good Works; yea, even into our good Intentions, and mingles therewith some little of his Venom, when he cannot get in much.

HE gives sometimes a Weariness in the Way of Virtue, and makes that seem heavy, which in Fact is light; giving the Soul a Backwardness to do well, to overcome it self. He takes away also the Hope of surmounting our Imperfections, and of attaining true Virtue, that he may render our Souls cowardly and slothful, because they do not see the Means whereby to arrive at solid Virtue. He confounds our Spirits, that they may not discover the Truth of Things as they are before God; but may please themselves still with seeming Virtues, and fine Speculations. Let us therefore watch always, that he make not our first Fervour

Fervour cool, and our good Resolution of embracing true Virtue.

HE will attempt, even when we have acquired Virtue, to lead us into spiritual Negligence; persuading us, that we may well rest, seeing that we have acquired it, and that we cannot advance further in it. I have known such Persons, as have said to me, that they were arrived at the highest Degree of Virtue to which they could attain; and they said so because they had read all they could read of it: And so they judged that to read more, was but to repeat what they had already read and understood. Which to me seemed great Pride, and spiritual Negligence, which the Devil had planted in their Heart. Not to advance in Virtue, is to fall back; seeing that Man never attains that Perfection that he ought.

IT is written in the holy Scripture, *Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect*, to teach us, that we should tend to the Perfection of GOD Himself, and never stop in the Way of Virtue; but always tend to a greater Perfection, even to the last Moment of our Life, that we may come the nearer to the Perfection of our Heavenly Father.

I MUST now shew you the Evils which spiritual Negligence causes. It is a Pestilence in the good Air of Virtue: For tho' you had acquired many Virtues, they could not subsist in your Soul, without spiritual Diligence, seeing in this World we cannot be free of Enemies, who continually attack us.

WE might be for some Time at Rest in Virtue; but this Repose would be the most dangerous

Combat of our Souls, which think to rest, as did the rich Man in the Gospel, who had his Granaries filled; but it was said unto him, *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee, and then whose shall those Things be?* The same shall be said to them who think they have acquired many Virtues, and yet have not spiritual Diligence: They shall find themselves deceived at Death, because they have not watched over their Virtues, having suffered the Corruption of their Nature to reign there.

WHAT Evils does not Negligence bring in civil Affairs? Countries and Cities are ruin'd by Want of Foresight. For if a Lord or Governor of a Country is not diligent to watch over it, his Enemies will surprize him, and he will lose his Honour and Goods while asleep: And if the Magistrate of a Town is not diligent to watch over the Inhabitants, they will neglect their Duty, and bring into the Commonwealth Things which afterwards they cannot remedy.

It is the same as to the Superior of a House or Society; if he neglect to watch over those who are under his Care, he will find himself oppress'd with Confusion, which he cannot redress afterwards. Negligence in Business impoverishes many, and makes them lose themselves.

By Negligence also the Grain and Fruits of the Earth are lost, when they are not sown and reaped in Season. It spoils Household Provision; rusts the Iron; brings Moths in Cloaths; in short, Negligence has brought many rich Men to Poverty; and many who were in Honour and Reputation, into Disgrace; and it brings Damage and Evil unto every Thing, even to the least Things.

BUT

BUT this Negligence in civil Things, tho' it causes so many Evils, is nothing in Comparison of spiritual Negligence; seeing the first Causes only temporal and transitory Evils, but the other such as are eternal. It deprives Man of all Manner of Good, and subjects him to all Manner of Evil.

FOR he that has not spiritual Diligence to watch against the Enemies of his Soul, and over the Means that he must take for his Salvation, must perish were it only by this Negligence, though he should commit no other Sin: For it is of our Souls that the Scripture says in a perfect Sense, *The Ground that is not laboured, shall bring forth Thorns and Thistles*: Because the Ground of our Souls became cursed by Sin; and being fallen into this Curse, it can no longer bring forth any wholesome Fruit, without bestowing on it great Diligence, to kill the Tares and Weeds of Corruption.

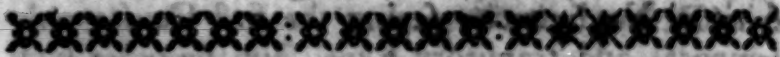
FOR if these be not rooted out, they will always choke the good Seed, even tho' it were sown in abundance in our Souls. It must be maintained by continual Diligence, otherwise it will bring forth no Fruit; we must watch against our Enemies; we must still resist the Inclinations of this corrupt Nature; and finally we must continually study the Knowledge of ourselves. For he who does not know himself, is ignorant of all, and cannot arrive at the Virtue *to be meek and lowly*, which *Jesus Christ* says, *we must learn of Him*.

Hufum, Feb. 3,

1674.

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BETTER



LETTER XX.

*How we must pass three Bridges to come to the
Heavenly Jerusalem.*

My Child,

IT seems you understand not what Poverty of Spirit is, or that you are not willing to practise it; for as soon as it comes in your Fancy to have any Thing, you call for it or buy it; and often after you have got it, you lose it or suffer it to be spoiled. These are no other but the Desires of corrupt Nature, which always covets that which it hath not, and is never satisfied with that which it hath, desiring always to have more; and he who followeth this Corruption goeth softly to Hell, because it inclines to all Kind of Sins: Wherefore he that would become a Christian, ought never to follow it, neither in little or great Things, to which *Jesus Christ* adviseth us when He saith, *Deny yourself.*

Not that God stands in Need of this Denial, but because we perish in following this corrupt Nature, which is an Enemy to God, and evermore incites us to do Evil. You laid the Foundation of Virtue in your Soul, when you forsook the World, your Country and your Relations, to follow *Jesus Christ*. But the Edifice of this Virtue must be perfected, before God take up his Residence in your Soul.

WHER-

WHEREFORE you need not wonder, if you do not feel Him acting in your Soul, according to your Desires; because GOD cannot dwell with Self-will. And altho' you feel Him sometimes in good Desires, yet this lasts not, but is quickly changed into Coldness or evil Desires: Which Evils are engendered by Self-will, which, being an Enemy to GOD is wholly corrupted, insomuch that it can do no Good, but bringeth forth all Sorts of Evils. For this Cause you ought always to suspect your own Will, and never to follow it, no more in small Things than in great.

It seemeth to you often that your own Will is good, and that the Thing which you desire to do, or leave undone, will be good. But if you knew the Corruption of your own Will, you would follow it in nothing, in regard that the Devil and Sin may mingle themselves with the most holy Things. For this Cause you ought to be jealous of all Kind of Desires, to the End you may always contradict this Self-will, which is so corrupt, that it leads always to Evil directly or indirectly.

If you could well understand this Point, and war against your own Will, I should quickly see the Spirit of GOD revive in you: There is Nothing but your Self-will, that opposeth this, which hindereth the Spirit of *Christ*. Which makes me often sigh, when I see that the Devil hath still so much Power over the Children of GOD, to make them do what he pleases by their Self-will.

So long as they follow their own Wills, GOD shall never have the Dominion over their Souls: Because he cannot come and dwell in their Souls, unless Man of his free Choice shall render up to
GOD

God that Free-will which God gave him when He created him: And renouncing Self-will, submit his Will in all Things to the Will of God, suffering himself to be governed and guided in all Things by that Divine Will, which evermore willeth our greatest Good, and cannot but will Things that are good for our spiritual and temporal Advantage.

A PERSON can never be without Displeasure, for having followed his own Will; when we consider the Evil which Self-will procureth to us. For Life and Death depend upon our Will, seeing that in resigning it to the Will of God, we shall live eternally, and in following it for our own Satisfaction, we shall die eternally. And this is the *Fire and the Water*, in the Midst of which Man is placed. And he may turn himself to what Side he will, and no Body can constrain him: For he is free to follow his own Will; as he is free to resign that Will to the Will of God.

AND therefore ye must resolve to choose the one or the other, Life or Death. For ye must not deceive yourselves: No Body shall attain to Life Eternal by following his own Will; and no Body can ever be damned in submitting the same to the Will of God. I know very well, ye will all say to me with your Mouths, that ye will submit your Wills to that of God, whilst in Effect ye do not submit it upon Occasion, and your own Wills are always followed, maintained, and defended, as if they were good, tho' they be always evil.

FOR my own Part, I dare never follow my own Will in any Thing, because I find it to be corrupt: And I am sure it can only do Evil, that it is an Enemy to God, and contrary to the Love of
my

my Neighbour. And therefore, I evermore suspect that which cometh of my Self-Love, and dare never execute the Motions of Self-Love, although the Things it proposes to me, seem to me to be perfect. I would not for all that follow or put them in Practice, before I recommended them to God, and learned from Him, if the Motions of my own Will be conformable to the Will of God, and then I freely put them in Execution: But I desist from them, when I do not understand that God confirms them.

FOR, to come to our Eternal Salvation, we must of Necessity pass *three Bridges*, before we can enter into the Heavenly *Jerusalem*. The first Bridge is, to *forsake the World*, and retire from the *Dangers of Sin*. The second Bridge is, to *forsake Riches and worldly Pleasures*, and to *covet nothing in this World*. The third Bridge is, to *renounce our own Will*, that we may be entirely guided and governed by the Will of God. And no Body shall ever attain to Life Eternal, without having passed these three Bridges.

First, To forsake the World. Man may well be amused by divers earthly Things, but he can never be satisfied therewith, in regard that all these Things are without Man, and can only flatter his Senses; but God being in the Centre of the Soul of Man, is alone able to satisfy him; because our Soul is a Vessel capable of God, nothing but He can fill or content it. Behold the Reason why all the Men in the World are in Covetousness, because they cannot be filled with all Things which they covet; and the more they have of them, the more insatiably do they desire them; because all these earthly Things are not suitable Nourishment for

our Souls. They must be fed with God Himself, or they can never be content.

WHEREFORE think it not strange, that you always covet some other Thing than that which you have, because this Covetousness is rooted in the Nature of all Men; and those who do not believe this, deceive themselves; for there is nothing more deceitful than the Heart of Man, which will needs imagine, that it is not proud, covetous, and infected with other Sins, tho' it be born in all Kind of Sin, and inclined to all Sort of Evil. And therefore no Person can be delivered from his Covetousness, except those who have overcome corrupt Nature; which you have not done yet: For as yet you too much follow the Inclinations of this Corruption, and you often covet that which you have not.

AND if you followed *True Virtue*, you would never desire but *Things necessary*; and when the *Will of Doing, of Saying, or of Coveting any Thing* taketh you, you ought to stop the Course of these Desires, and maturely to consider, if that which you covet, be *saving, or necessary for Life*. And when you do not judge your Desires saving or necessary, you ought not to follow them, but assuredly to believe, that this Coveting is vicious: And therefore you ought to *resist it, and not to follow it*.

FOR Example: If you are at Table to take your Refreshment, and there ariseth in you a Desire to eat some other Thing than what is set before you, that is a sinful Coveting: When the Victuals which you have are sufficient to nourish your Body, be content, without wishing for those which would please your Taste better; for otherwise you fall into the Sin of Gluttony, besides that of Covetousness. And

And if you have a House that can shelter you from Rain and Winds, you do ill to covet another more beautiful; seeing Necessity should suffice a Christian, and he ought never to desire more: Altho' he could have it, he should despise it, because *Christ his Master, did always choose the least and most despised.* If you have a Suit which preserves you from Cold, and doth honestly cover your Body, you ought not to desire another, tho' you could easily have it; for this would be a sinful Covetousness, or a Piece of Pride, in desiring to appear fine before Men: Wherefore you should never desire other Linnen, other Cloaths, or any other new Thing, so long as your own may serve your Need, if you would abide in the Grace of God; seeing all Sorts of Covetousness are Sins, and Sin makes a Man God's Enemy.

So long as Covetousness remaineth in the Soul, the Love of God cannot abide there; seeing the Scripture saith, *Where your Heart is, there is your Treasure.* And if your Affections be yet set on Drink, Meat, Apparel, lying well, and good Furniture, or other transitory Things; these are the Treasures which you have chosen, and you ought to expect none in Heaven: Since *your Heart is yet on the Earth, by Consequence your Treasure is there also.*

BUT you who have undertaken a Journey to the Heavenly Jerusalem, pass the second Bridge of coveting earthly Things, or otherwise you shall never come to the End, for which you have forsaken the World.

THE only Remedy for this Evil is to covet Nothing, and to be always content with that which God giveth: If He send Abundance, we ought to
bless

bleſs Him for it, and uſe it well : If He give little, we ought to be as well ſatisfied with this little as with much. And this is the true Way of being happy in this World, and of enjoying eternal Happineſs. But on the contrary, coveting this World makes us miſerable, and is the Cauſe that we are never content.

THE Perſon that wiſheth nothing, is much happier than he who can have much : And ſo much the rather, as it is a certain Rule, that the more content we are with little, the more cloſely do we follow *Chriſt*; and he who would have more, can only follow Him at a greater Diſtance. Choose then, and if you love to follow *Jeſus Chriſt* cloſely, chooſe always the leaſt of theſe Things that ſerve for your Uſe. Never take the beſt, tho' you might eaſily have it; for he who taketh the leaſt, becauſe he cannot have that which is better, is a Slave that followeth *Jeſus Chriſt* by Constraint. But be ye lawful Children of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and follow Him in his Abaſement willingly and joyfully, and *you ſhall find Reſt to your Souls*; having paſſed this ſecond Bridge of Covetouſneſs, and going on to the third, which is, *To renounce your own Will*.

THIS Bridge is the laſt which muſt be paſſed, to come to eternal Life; for enjoying whereof we may well deprive ourſelves of the Delights of this miſerable Life, which are ſo baſe and imperfect, that they deſerve not to be called Delights or Pleaſures: Beſides, that they are of ſo ſhort a Continuance, and that one Moment of theſe Pleaſures begetteth a Year's Trouble. Suffer then, my Child, ſome little Inconveniencies in this World, and do not wiſh to be delivered from them; for eternal Joy is well worth this ſmall Pittance of Sufferings. In the renouncing your own Will, ye will not find ſo many

many Enemies, if you have a strong Resolution, and an absolute Desire to enter into the *Heavenly Jerusalem*.

As concerning myself, I have no Need of Lands or Houses: A little Chamber of ten Feet Length sufficeth me for all the Days of my Life, though I should never go out of it: And for Cloaths and Food, I have more of them than is sufficient, without pretending to any Thing from others. I have no Need to speak or write to nourish my own Soul, in respect it is all filled with GOD: So that all I speak and do in this World, doth only regard the Advantage of my Neighbour.

AND you may be well assured, that I have no other Will but that of GOD; and that my own doth not live any more in me. For I have by the Grace of GOD past this third Bridge of renouncing my own Will; and I have resigned it to GOD, who turns and sets it according to his good Pleasure; wherewith I am always content, as I suppose you have seen abundantly by Experience: For I bless Him in all Times, in Ease and Hardships, in Adversity as in Prosperity: And I would not, that any Thing had gone otherwise, than all the Adversities you have seen befall me; seeing all have fallen out for my Good, and GOD hath reaped his Glory from the Injuries of our Adversaries.

As to good Works, do as many as you can, and you shall be recompenced for every one of them to all Eternity: From which you ought not to desist, for the Inventions of Men, who say, that they are Filthiness, or that it is to justify one's Self to do good Works to be saved. But you must strive to do good Works, according as you have a Desire to approach nearer to *Christ*; with this Condition

notwithstanding, that ye do your good Works to please God, and not to satisfy yourself or any other Creature.

FOR in this consisteth all the Good and Evil of your good Works. Seeing the same Works will be holy when they shall be done in the Will of God, and they will be evil when they shall be done to satisfy ourselves. For all Sins and all Virtue consist in following the Will of God, or in following our own Will; seeing there is no other Sin in Substance, but that of withdrawing our Affections from God, to place them upon any Creature: And there is no other true Virtue in Substance, but that of having all our Affections fixed upon God.

AND by this you may comprehend how the good Works of Men are Filthiness: For of Necessity every good Work done to please Men, or to satisfy ourselves, must be disagreeable to God; seeing Man was created for no other End but to love Him, and that notwithstanding he carrieth his Affections unto vile and abject Creatures, in Contempt of the End for which he was created. He incurreth also his Wrath, so long as he abideth out of his Love; and he abides out of his Love, so far as he loves himself, or other Creatures. And therefore all the Works which he doth in that State, are defiled by Sin; altho' in themselves they are good, they are rendered evil for being done out of the Grace of God, and shall be condemned by Him as Filthiness.

HOWBEIT, we should not forbear to do as many good Works as we can, during this mortal Life, into which we are sent to fight against our Enemies: How can we abide without fighting, or doing good Works, without being overcome by our mortal Enemies,

Enemies, the Devil and the Flesh? Which Enemies we must continually overcome, if we would be saved. And for this, good Works are precisely necessary to Salvation. Not that God hath Need of our good Works to save us; but we have Need to do good Works to be saved.

DOES not *Christ* say to his Apostles, concerning some Devils: *This Kind of Devils goeth not forth, but by Fasting and Prayer?* Upon which I would willingly ask them who despise good Works, how they can be freed of these Kinds of Devils, if they will not fast nor pray to obtain their Salvation? And how shall these carry the Kingdom of Heaven by Force, who will do nothing to have it?

WHEREBY we may see, in how great an Error these are who despise good Works, and in how dangerous a Time we live; seeing in it, a Lye is taught for the Truth. And altho' these Preachers teach the Gospel by Words, they bely it by their Glosses and by their Actions, and teach the People, that they cannot imitate *Jesus Christ*, altho' He saith expressly, *Be ye Followers of Me*; and that to do good Works to be saved, is to justify ourselves: Whereas the Scripture saith, *Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*: And in another Place, *Labour not for the Meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting Life*. By which it appears, that God precisely commandeth, to labour, and to do good Works, for obtaining eternal Life. For He saith, *Ask and ye shall obtain, knock and it shall be opened unto you; and he that seeketh findeth*.

BUT these new Doctors have found out so subtil Inventions to seduce Men, that it were impossible to discover them without the Spirit of God. For they cover their Errors with Holiness and Humi-

lity; they say, we must do good Works only in Acknowledgment of that which *Christ* hath done. Which Things give a Colour of Piety to their Sins, in seeking to give Thanks to GOD by their good Works, and acknowledging they can merit nothing by their good Works, nor have Salvation by their Merits, which is most true. For Salvation was given us immediately by GOD, at the Time of our Creation; and all Men were created in *Adam* to Salvation, and made Heirs of Heaven. Insomuch that they ought to do nothing to have this Kingdom, which was freely given them in Property. And also temporal Man could not merit the least Thing that is eternal. And all the good Works of Angels and Men together, can never merit the least Degree of eternal Glory. Likewise, GOD will never have Need of any Merits to save Men, seeing He is almighty, independent of all Things, particularly of the Merits of Men.

BUT tho' this be true, with Relation to GOD, yet it is not true with Relation to Men, seeing they have Need to employ all Kind of Means to recover the Grace of GOD, after having so carelessly lost it by their Sins: And after Man hath voluntarily thrown himself into Hell, can it be said that he would be presumptuous, or that he would justify himself, in doing his Endeavour to come out of it? Is it not a greater Presumption to say that he would do nothing to come out of it, and that GOD must deliver him from it, if He would save him? For GOD hath no Need of Men; and He remains as glorious, when Man abides in Hell, as when he saves himself: Seeing GOD is a Sovereign independent on all Things, whose Glory depends upon nothing but Himself. And if Man doth good Works, it is only for himself: For GOD has no Need of our Acknowledgments.

AND

AND it is a great Pride to think that GOD would have Man to do good Works to honour Him, or to recompence that which He hath done for Men; seeing he hath nothing worthy of GOD, and that Man can never do any Thing in Acknowledgment of the Favours received from his GOD: In Regard that Man is but a poor Nothing, mere Weakness and Corruption, from which can proceed nothing worthy to be offered to GOD, in Acknowledgment of that which GOD has done for Man. For these new Casuists themselves say, that the good Works of Men are Filthiness: How then will they present to GOD Filthiness in Recompence of that which GOD has done for them? This were odious; for the Proverb says, That it were better to have our Vessel empty, than fill'd with Uncleaness.

By which it appears, that those ignorant Persons contradict themselves by their evil Doctrines, while they say on the one Side, *That good Works are Filthiness and Thorns, which pierce the Body of Jesus Christ;* and on the other Side, *That we must do good Works in Testimony of the Love we bear to GOD:* Which cannot agree: For a Person would hold it for a great Affront, if any should present him with Filthiness and Thorns, that pierce his Body, in Recompence of the good Deeds which he had received from that Person. Must we not then believe, that GOD would find Himself much more affronted, when his Creature should present Him with Filthiness and Things that offend Him? This is what these Reformed do, who say, *That good Works are Filthiness;* and on the other Side, *That they must do good Works in Testimony of the Love they bear unto GOD.*

SURELY it is Time that GOD send his Holy Spirit that leads Men into all Truth, seeing they are

in so great Darknes, that they know not whither they are going, and take (almost in all Things) that which is false for true. Reckon yourself happy for having known the Truth from Lying, and follow it faithfully even unto Death.

GOD hath no Need of our Actions, but willeth that we should prove ourselves, to know if we be entirely subject to the Will of GOD, and if we be ready to obey Him when we discover his holy Will, in Things small and great. If we would have eternal Life, we must obey Him in this Life in small Things, because Men have no great Matters to do here; all their greatest Affairs are but Trifles before GOD: But He considers in all our Works the Obedience and Submission we have for Him.

FOR it is most true, that the same Actions may be Sin and Virtue, according to the different Intentions wherewith they are done. For Example: Ye may be neat, cleanly, and order your Actions well, to be esteemed a good Manager, or for human Respects; and these Ends are Sins. But to do all these Things carefully to obey GOD, and to please Him; these Ends are virtuous, and make a Man perfect, altho' otherwise he have nothing singular or extraordinary in his Behaviour: It is enough that he suffer himself to be governed by the Will of GOD.

AND ye need not resort to Universities to learn this Lesson; seeing the simplest Peasant in the World may suffer himself to be governed by the Spirit of GOD in every Thing, if he will submit himself to Him. There are only three Words to be learned, which are *Submission to the Will of GOD*, voluntarily and without Contradiction.

BEHOLD

BEHOLD a short Lesson, easy to be practised by him who has firmly resolved upon it: For all consists in knowing if ye will or will not obey God in every Thing; forasmuch as in this Point consists all Perfection and Imperfection, all Virtue and Impiety, yea Life and Death eternal depend upon following our own Will or the Will of God: Not one single Person shall be saved, dying out of the Conduct of God, and no Body shall ever be damned but he who will die in his own Will. Wherefore there needs not so many Books, Studies, or Practices, to teach the Way of Salvation; seeing it consists in denying our own Will, to resign ourselves to the Will of God. This Resignation of your own Will to that of God, will assuredly conduct you to the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, whither we may all arrive by this single and only Means of Resignation to the Will of God.

April 1, 1674.



LETTER

L E T T E R XXI.

That it is profitable to know our own Corruption.

My Child,

I HAVE seen your Confession, and your Resolution to submit yourself entirely to the Will of God in all Things : And I shall never ask more, providing ye will make it effectual. But if ye cannot do that, I would rather desire that you do not stay with me, because we should breed Trouble to one another without Profit. For as for me, I cannot forbear to do the Will of God, so far as I know it ; and when you do not follow it, I must needs tell you it, if I would discharge my Conscience, and that sometimes even with rough Words, which your corrupt Nature cannot endure.

AND you would have some Reason to dislike it, if I had reprov'd you out of Passion : For I have no Authority over you, besides that you willingly give me. Neither would I ever have Authority over any Body, no, not over my Servants, from whom I would have no other but voluntary Services, in leaving them always free to serve me, or to leave me. And if I do this towards wicked Creatures, what ought I not to do towards the Children of God ? I will not take away this Liberty from any Body, no, not from the Children whom

whom GOD hath given me, who shall be always free for me, to follow me, or to leave me when they please.

BUT so long as I see they are willing to accomplish the Will of GOD, according to their Power, I cannot leave them, because of the Covenant I have entered into with them, which no Body can dissolve, because it is GOD Himself who hath bound it up. And there is nothing but Sin which can separate the Mother from the Children, who notwithstanding has an Order from their Father not to suffer their Sins any longer: Whereof I have advertised them, to the End that they may take their Measures thereby, and be surprized with nothing; and if you have for yourself, resolved before GOD and Men to submit your own Will to that of GOD, come stay with me, you shall be very welcome; for they are such Children whom I esteem and seek after. I will assist them as well in Reference to their Bodies as their Souls: But these who still continue to follow their own Wills, have nothing to do to trouble me, or to come near me, to breed me the Displeasure of seeing them live in Sin, without being able to amend them.

IF I followed this corrupt Will of mine, I should perhaps commit greater Faults than you do; you commit them often, because you have not discovered the Original of this Evil, which proceedeth from this, that you love as yet to follow your own Will.

AND so long as you continue in this Affection, you will continually fall from one Evil to another, and will never have the Liberty of a true Child of GOD, who being intirely resigned unto the Conquest of GOD, lives as a Child without Care carried

ed in the Arms of his Father, delivered from the Slavery of the Devil, who can have no Hold upon the Person who hates his own Will, and will follow it no more in any Thing. I know well that you have not a Desire to do Evil, but a Resolution to please GOD. Nevertheless, you do Evil and displease GOD in following your own Will; you have passed the two first Bridges, have forsaken the World, and the Love of the Riches and Pleasures thereof. But you find Difficulty to pass the third, which is, *to forsake the Desire of following your own Will.* This hath always seemed the easiest to me, although it seem the hardest to you; for that you have not sufficiently penetrated the Thing itself, and have suffered yourselves insensibly to be carried away by the Motives of your own Wills, without discovering that this was Evil, whilst I see no more in you but this which hinders you from receiving the Spirit of GOD according to your Wish.

My Children, do not think that I require any Complacency or Man-pleasing from you; I should be troubled to see you aiming at that. But I should have great Joy, if I saw that the Hatred of your own Wills were planted in the Bottom of your Souls, and that you were in a firm effectual Resolution never to follow them any more. Then there should be no more Differences among us. What one willed another would do by the same Spirit of GOD, which would govern us all without Opposition.

Nov. 11, 1676.

LETTER

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L E T T E R XXII.

That the Self-will of Children ought to be mortified.

My good Friend,

I WAS glad to see by yours of the 16th of November, that you praise God for having found in my Writings profitable and wholesome Instructions, because I doubted if you were content to forsake the miserable World, to find Rest to your Soul. You now know how much the Nature of Men is corrupted by Sin, and is become Evil to such a Degree, that there needs no more, but to follow it, to go to Hell.

Now for resisting it, we must do Violence to ourselves, and contradict every Thing that corrupt Nature desires. This is troublesome to Persons of Age, who by long Custom have inured themselves to follow their own Will; but young Children are more tractable to comply with Reason, when they are govern'd by it. This depends upon the good Conduct of those who have the Charge of them. For a Child is like soft Wax, on which you may impress what Seal you please; and if Christian Virtue were stamped upon them from their tender Age, they would follow it with as much Joy as they do their corrupt Nature, which is insolent and never satisfied or content, but still desiring that which it hath not. For this Cause the F
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thers and Mothers of Christian Children ought to govern their Children according to Reason, and to give them their Necessities by Weight and Measure, without following that to which they are inclined, because that natural Inclination is always vicious; and if you suffer these Vices to grow up with the Child, you will find it very difficult to amend them, when they are become strong.

WHEREFORE I advise you, to govern your Children well, and to give them only that which you clearly see to be necessary for their Maintenance, without asking them what they would have, or what they would not have; but to make them content with that which is good and wholesome for them, without giving them, thro' too great a Fondness, all they desire, seeing their Desires can never be good, as proceeding from their own corrupt Nature, wherein they are born, as All the Children of *Adam*, who are Children of Wrath and Sin: And if during this mortal Life they do not overcome this Corruption, they die Children of Wrath, and perish eternally.

THEREFORE if you love yours, you must govern them according to the Will of God, and not according to their own Appetites and perverse Wills. For if you shall govern them well, they will bless you in Heaven to all Eternity: But if you suffer them to follow their own Wills, they will despise you in this World, and curse you to all Eternity. And Mothers may likewise greatly contribute to their Salvation, when during their tender Years they instruct them in the Christian Doctrine, exercising their Manners in the Practice thereof, 'till this Practice is changed into Nature, and makes them happy both in this World and that which is to come.

Now

Now it concerns you, my Friends, to know if ye be resolved to become true Christians or not. But if ye wish this Happiness to your own Souls, prepare it also for those of your Children, and habituate them in their tender Years to deny their own Wills. Never give them what they desire, when ye see that the Thing which they desire is not good or necessary. Break their Wills as much as ye can, and ye shall make them happy in Time and Eternity.

SEEING there are so many noble Persons, and Persons of Quality, who break the Self-will of their Children in all Things, to make them esteemed among Men, how much more ought a Christian to do this, to make their Children acceptable unto God? And these Parents dare not sometimes give their Children as much as they have Need of, for Fear they become too gross: Others dare not suffer an easy Garment for their Bodies, or Shoe for their Feet, to be made for them, for Fear they grow too big: They make bare their Arms and Neck, even in the Time of the greatest Colds, and the Children suffer all this willingly, because it seems good to their Parents, who sometimes mortify them so much, that they eat not a Morsel according to their own Will.

AND this will not hurt the Health of your Children. Rather Children, who are suffered to follow their own Wills, are languishing, lean, and perish. And I know by Experience, and by having governed a great Number of Children in the Hospital of *Lisfe*, that Children and other Persons keep their Health much better by living regularly, eating and drinking moderately, and of common Fare, taken at the ordinary Time; than those who follow their Appetites, by eating unseason-

ably, or of dainty Meats, or abundance of Meat and Drink. For I have many Times received into that Hospital, Children descended both of rich and poor Parents, who had been equally accustomed to eat and drink at all Hours, when they had a Mind to it, or to have Meat and Drink according to their Taste, and would not eat this or that, forbearing to eat when they had not Dainties according to their Fancies, while in the mean Time they appeared extenuated, of a yellow Colour, and pale, like decaying or sick Persons: But after I had kept them three Months in the Hospital, nourished with common Fare, and well ordered in Time, as all the rest, these Children who before were spoiled, became healthy and chearful, changing their Colour, and growing sensibly better, after they had done some Violence to themselves in the Beginning, and I had constrained them to submit to the Rule appointed for doing every Thing. For I did not suffer any to eat or drink out of Time, but precisely at Eight o'Clock in the Morning, at Twelve o'Clock of the Day, and Eight at Night. At other Times no Body eat so much as an Apple; for when any Fruit was brought from their Parents, it was carried to the Buttry, and set on the Table at Meal-time before her for whom it was brought, who distributed the same to her Companions as she thought fit, but could carry nothing away from the Table, the rest being laid up 'till To-morrow. I likewise caused them all to rise and lie down in Summer and Winter at the same Hour, readily to pray to God, and to work all together at the appointed Time, without any Partiality or Exception. And I found by Experience, that this Government gave good Health to all those that were under my Charge, and they were content after they were accustomed to the Rules of the House. No Body murmured

at it, and every one took well with it, even those who had been accustomed before to eat and drink, sleep and work, when and how they pleased: And many of these young Maids, whom I placed in Service with the Inhabitants of the Town, gave me Thanks for having so reclaimed their Natures that they were for that Cause loved and contented where they stayed, as their Masters and Mistresses also came often to thank me for giving them so good Maid-Servants, because this is so rare among poor People, since they often spoil their Children more in their tender Years than the Rich, believing they do them Good by suffering them to follow all their Wills: Which is a great Abuse, since on the Contrary, it is really to do them great Evil, and to make them miserable in Time and in Eternity.

For a Child that is not broken in his tender Age, will not willingly be subject to another when he is grown up, and would always follow his own Will as he has been accustomed, and likewise will not be content with the Fare which he gets elsewhere, when he has been used to eat that which his corrupt Nature loved best at Home. This Change must needs be troublesome to him, whereas the accustoming to a good Rule makes him happy and contented wheresoever he may chance to be; and to eat coarse Meats with as good a Stomach, as those that are delicate, regarding nothing but Necessity.

BUT Children who are accustomed to follow their own Wills in their younger Years, will follow it in every Thing when they are of Age, if they have the Means to do it: And if they be used in their tender Age, to eat and drink at all

Hours, according to their Appetite, they will hold on this Course after they are grown up.

BEHOLD then, how Fathers and Mothers oft-times contribute to the Damnation of their Children, whilst in the mean Time they may be damned themselves for not having governed their Children well. We hear that *Eli* the High-Priest was punished of GOD, who broke his Neck by falling backwards, when he heard that the Ark of the Covenant was taken, and his two Sons killed. Every own knows that this Man was of a good Life, and that he was not chastised for his own Sins, but because he had not chastised his Children for their Misdeeds, but had only told them mildly, that they did ill and offended the LORD.

AND if this Sin of Omission was so exemplarily punished in a holy Man, how much more will the Negligences be punished, which Fathers and Mothers commit in Relation to their Children, whom they love so sottishly, as to suffer them to follow their corrupt Natures, to make them miserable in Time and Eternity, thro' too great Tenderneſs, being unwilling to mortify them in their Youth. Surely they ought to expect eternal Chastisements on this Account, for that they sin divers Ways in their Children, some by counselling them to do Evil for their Revenge, and others by tolerating their Evil; some by defending it, another by praising or flattering it; others by abetting and maintaining it; others by not revealing it, or sharing in it.

THUS Men are so blind, that they not only do not see all the Sins which they commit in another, but also teach their Children to sin in their Youth, without

without thinking they do Evil; yea, they believe they give a Testimony of their Friendship to their Children, by inculcating Sin upon their Souls from their tender Age: Since as soon as a Child is born they cover it with rich Cloth, carrying it to Baptism covered with Gold, Silk, or Embroidery; and as soon as he begins to have his Eyes open to behold Vanities, they shew them to him, praising them as beautiful, that they may entice this tender Heart to covet them: And we see plainly, that the Corruption of the Child's Nature taketh Delight to see any Thing that is beautiful and shining, even before it have any Sentiment of Reason, because of the Inclination to Evil wherein Man is born, which Inclination the Parents cherish instead of rooting it out.

YEA, they incite them to Sin more than their Nature is inclined, by praising to them Vanities, and every Thing that is beautiful and good to the Senses, before the Spirit of the Children be capable to love them themselves: For if they cloath them with any white Linnen, or some fashionable Stuff, they tell them over and over again, that this is pretty, and the Child is fine, that by these Commendations the Child may imprint on its Heart the Vanity of being fine, and the Desire of being well cloathed: They do the same in Relation to Meat and Drink, which they give not to Children according to their Necessities, but according to their Sensuality, saying to them, *O how good is it! How delicious is it! Eat, it is so good!* And by those Means they urge them to take delicate Morsels, and to delight in them, settling their tender Affections upon them, instead of settling them upon GOD: And they grow up, thus turned away from the Love of GOD, to place their

B b 3 Affections

Affections on Drinking, Eating, Cloathing, and other sensual Things.

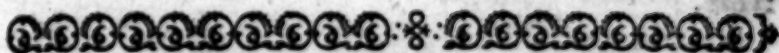
HENCE it is that Persons advanced in Age, know not what it is to love GOD, because they were not taught this in their Youth, but to love themselves and the Pleasures of all their Senses, according to which they live and die, without apprehending the Danger of their Salvation: Thus living as the Beasts, by seeking after that which is most beautiful and best, according to their Appetites and Desires, as if they had no other Felicity to expect, but the sensual Pleasures, which they can taste in this World.

BUT if you would become true Christians, exercise yourselves in the Mortification of your Senses, and endeavour likewise to exercise your Children therein while they are young, to the End ye may make them happy in this temporal Life, and that which is eternal.

**The 13th of
December,
1676.**



LETTER



L E T T E R XXIII.

That SOLID VIRTUE doth not consist barely in good Desires.

My Friend,

BY yours of the Fifth of this Month I see, that you feel in your Soul strong Motions, and desire to know if they come from GOD, because of the Dangers of Anti-christ: Which ought to be feared; for at present, he seduceth much under the Appearance of Holiness, whereby well-meaning Persons are seduced by the Devil, who imprints upon their Spirit, that they have already attained a Disengagement from earthly Things, yea, to Resignation: Altho' as yet they do not so much as know what true Virtue is; which consists in the renouncing our own Wills, to leave ourselves in all Things to the Will of GOD, so as not to follow corrupt Nature in any Thing. If you be in that Estate, you are without Doubt to believe, that the Motions you feel in your Soul come from the Holy Spirit. But if they do not produce in your Soul such Operations, you must suspect these Motions and not follow them, but so far as they induce you to the Love of GOD and Hatred of yourself.

FOR to rely upon ~~some~~ sensible Sweetnesses, or Views of Divine Things, is dangerous; even tho' those Sweetnesses and good Thoughts did come from GOD; because Nature always flatters itself, and

and there is nothing more deceitful than the Heart of Man.

WHICH I find by Experience more and more; for I know Persons who esteem themselves virtuous, because they have good Desires, or believe they are regenerate, because they have a Desire to be so; which are nothing but Amusements of *Satan*, who endeavours to fill Men with false Hopes, that do not produce their Effects, to the End he may make them spend their Life in spiritual Negligence, and live and die in the Corruption whereinto they are fallen by the Sin of *Adam*, that they may never attain to the true new Birth by the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*. This is the most cunning Device of *Satan*, wherewith he makes many to perish, altho' desirous of Virtue. Hence it is said, *That Hell is paved with good Intentions*. These are necessary for attaining Salvation; yet Men will not be saved by them, when they do not put them in Execution to the utmost of their Power.

FOR a good Desire is nothing but a good Motion, which GOD puts in the Soul, to see if it will correspond therewith. And if GOD do not give this, Man could never have it of himself, for of himself he is ever inclined to do Evil, and not Good. It is GOD who of his pure Mercy gives good Desires to Men, without their being able to deserve them in the least; yea, gives them sometimes to great Sinners, who, in the Midst of their Sins, often feel Desires to forsake Sin, and be converted to GOD; because GOD desireth not the Death of a Sinner, but that he may be converted and live: For this End He never fails to give Man good Desires, yea Occasions for doing Good: But it is Man's own Fault if he do not co-operate with these good Desires which GOD hath given him. For as it is GOD's Work

to inspire Good, so it is also Man's Part to execute the Good wherewith God inspires him.

NOT that Man of himself hath the Strength to execute the good Inspirations of God, in regard he is so corrupted that he can do no Good without a particular Grace, or the Increase of new and continual Graces: But it is most certain, that God on his Part giveth and continually augmenteth his Grace to him, who truly seeks and desires it.

FOR if a Soul were faithful to the Desire which God gives, to become a true Christian, it would assuredly find all the Means of doing this, by embracing the Gospel Law: But if a Person will continue in corrupt Nature, without being willing to renounce the same, it is impossible he can become a true Christian, tho' God often give him the Desire thereof.

GOD will force no Body, after He hath created all Men free. He inspires them, and draws them by good Motions, which they ought to follow without Constraint, by taking and seeking all the Means which may lead them to Christian Perfection. And in doing this God will assist them, by augmenting his Grace, Strength and Light, every Moment.

BUT if a Person neglect to seek Him, he shall not have the Grace to find Him: Wherefore the Scripture saith, *He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

GOD always knocks at our Heart first, by good Desires, and by his Light makes us see the Vanity of the World, the Looseness of Christians, the Wickedness of Men, and the Danger that is in

con-

conversing with them. When all these Things are discovered by our Understanding, it is GOD who hath knocked at the Door of our Heart, to awake us out of the Sleep of Death. And He strikes yet more forcibly, when he gives us the Desire of forsaking the World, and coming out of the Dangers thereof, that we may not partake of its Sins. And GOD strikes this third Blow on the Heart of Man, when He gives him the Resolution to become a true Christian.

BEHOLD what GOD does on his Part, to draw us to Him: But if Man turn a deaf Ear, and do not embrace the Means to follow these Lights, and to effectuate these good Desires, GOD ceaseth to knock and to give new Strength, limiting his Graces to the Correspondence which the Soul makes to the first, to which having corresponded, the Soul shall always feel new Strength, and an Augmentation of Light and Grace, by the Goodness and Mercies of GOD.

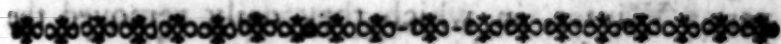
WHEREFORE Men greatly deceive themselves, to expect an Augmentation of Grace, so long as they do not correspond with the first, since GOD hath promised to set those over great Things, who have been faithful in small Things.

I SEE, my Friend, that you are willing to correspond with the Grace of GOD, since you have forsaken the World to follow *Jesus Christ*. This is to have passed the first Bridge, to come at the *Heavenly Jerusalem*: You must endeavour also to pass the other two, that you may not die in the Wilderness, without ever coming to the Land of Promise. I perceive well that you are walking on the second, and that your Heart is disengaged from Covetousness. There remains no more for you to

do, But to pass the third Bridge, of the Denial of your own Will, which is not yet wholly submitted to the Will of God. Entirely submit to the Will of God in every Thing, without being willing to follow your own in any Thing.

The 17th of June,

1675.



LETTER XXIV.

*That we must renounce the Ease and Pleasures
of Nature.*

My Child,

I WAS glad to understand your safe Arrival, with the Provisions; but I am sorry to hear that the Meat and Work doth not please you. I gave the Charge of governing these Affairs to *Clas Floris*, that he may dispose of them according as he finds convenient; and I am not present to see myself how he doth; for this Cause, I cannot give him a particular Rule for his Behaviour: He must do as he understands, seeing he is a Man of Spirit, and of Conscience: But it may be he hath more Zeal for overcoming corrupt Nature, than others have.

IN which he excells you; since being free to take the best, he is willing to content himself with that which is mean. And this should serve you for an Example, rather than an Occasion of Murmuring, since

since he being old, doth willingly that which you who are young do unwillingly: For you know that he came out of the same House out of which you are come, where Men studied to take the best of every Thing, to satisfy corrupt Nature; and hath cast himself of his own Accord into an Abstinence from these Things. He might have drunk Wine and Milk, and nevertheless was willing to content himself with Whey and Butter-Milk, having eaten very little Flesh and Eggs, during so severe a Winter, in which they daily removed the Snow, ere he could get out of the House. In short, his Life has been nothing but Labour and Mortification, for overcoming in himself the Flesh and the World, which he had forsaken, to become a Disciple of *Jesus Christ*.

AND you have also forsaken the World for the same End: Will you not then use the same Means which he found so advantageous, that he wrote from the Bottom of his Heart, he wished to have the same Labour all the Days of his Life?

WHEREIN he testified, that his Penitence was voluntary, and not constrained: But it seems that yours is not such, and that you endure Labour and Sobriety unwillingly; which must needs be troublesome to you; since Nature doth then suffer much, when it cannot have that which it desires.

BUT these Sufferings are mitigated, when Men ask their Reason, why this Corruption suffers, and for what End? Reason answers, it is to overcome your Corruptions, and to save your Soul. This should make all Contradictions light, since Life eternal well deserves that we should do some Violence to ourselves; which Life no Body can obtain, without resisting this Corruption.

BUT

BUT because Men do not understand the Scriptures, they believe it is Prudent to take the most beautiful or the best, and to give Way to Ease and sensual Appetite; altho' this is quite contrary to the Doctrine of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, and to the Practice of the ancient Fathers, and of the Christians of the primitive Church: Instead of which, the Apostles speak of nothing, but of Labours, of Sufferings, of Torments and Persecutions.

How is it possible, that he who would become a true Christian, should not remember all these Things, and the Ways wherein the first Christians walked, who forsaking all, willingly exposed themselves to the Want of all temporal Things, embracing the Poverty of *Jesus Christ*, though Poverty brings many Hardships? Those that were desirous to follow *Jesus Christ*, did not fear all these Things, but embraced them with Joy, and practised them with Contentment.

You have read in what Austerities the ancient Hermits of *Egypt* lived, most of whom lay upon the naked Earth, eating nothing but raw Herbs and Roots, being poorly cloathed, enduring patiently the great Colds and Heats of these desert Places; some carried great Stones all the Day long, from one Mountain to another, to beat down their Bodies; others lay naked in the Snow, for the same Effect: The most Part ate but once a Day after Sun-set, esteeming themselves happy when they had Water for their Drink.

THIS Example should encourage you to suffer the little Inconveniences which you find in the Service of God, since you desire to be saved; as well as those that endured so much, to overcome the Corruption of their Nature. And since God doth

not require such Austerities of you, suffer willingly the Accidents that happen; and when your Meat or Drink does not please your Taste, bless God, who (it may be) permits this, for subduing the sensual Appetites, which you have followed in Time past.

WHEREFORE well ordered Christians strive to mortify the Corruption of Nature in every Thing, in Drinking, Eating, Speaking, Hearing, Seeing, by doing the quite contrary to that which Sensuality desireth. One of my Acquaintance told me, that he was present in the Cloister of *Doway*, when the Son of a Prince was received among them, and that the first Day he received the Habit, the whole Convent had for their Broth Beans boiled in Water, without any other Sauce than a little Salt: When the Prince's Portion was set before him, the very Steam of these Beans in his Nose, made the Blood gush out in Abundance; which the Prior seeing, said to the Novice, my Brother, eat these Beans, they are good: And tho' the Novice endeavoured to eat them, he could not swallow them down without being moved divers Times to vomit; whilst in the mean Time they gave him no other Thing, but these Beans for his Meal: And seeing that he ate Nothing, the Prior said in the End, I perceive your Brother hath no Stomach for these Beans To-day; he must get of them To-morrow, he will eat them better: And so for three Days the Novice got no other Thing to eat, but the Beans which had been served up to him the first Day, and by this Mean he overcame the Sense of Taste, ate the Beans, and afterwards all Kind of Meats, how harsh or coarse soever.

I do not approve that so great Severity should be used, in this Point, toward Beginners; but I would greatly commend, that a Novice should study to mortify

mortify himself, by taking contentedly all that is set before him, blessing GOD, when He gives him any Thing that is good, in regard of his Weakness; and contenting himself with Things that do not please his Taste, because he knows himself unworthy, by Reason of his Sins, to have even dry Bread.

THIS should be the Exercise and Practice of him, that desires to become a true Christian; for if a Person will needs continue seeking his Appetite, he shall never attain Christian Perfection.

You think, if the Body were better treated, the Soul would be the calmer: This may readily deceive you, seeing ordinarily the Spirit lives according as the Flesh dies. And you have told me, that ye knew this by your own Experience, and that the Flesh doth not so much trouble you in *Northstrand*, as it did when you were in the World, and when its Appetite was better served; which proveth sufficiently, that the Labour and Victuals of *Northstrand* are more wholesome, than the Labour and Victuals which you had in *Hamburg*.

WHICH should make you resolve to love Abstinence and Labour, more than Ease and good Fare, embracing the Cross of *Christ*, rather than Ease and Repose, to follow your corrupt Nature, which leads unto Hell.

The 23d of August,

1676.

LETTER XXV.

He that denies not himself cannot be a true Christian.

My Friends,

I HAVE received a Letter, written by you both, the 5th of June this Year, by which ye acquaint me with the Resolution which ye have taken together, to forsake the World, and retire to *Northstrand*, where ye desire to buy some Possession, to live there together with your Family; which seemeth to me very good, provided ye were constant to persevere therein.

BUT I have seen you so changeable, that I cannot advise you any more. I must leave you to do as ye shall think fit, because ye are not resigned to the Will of God: Ye will, and ye will not: For as soon as ye find any Difficulties in the Service of God, ye look back, with *Laz's* Wife; and instead of embracing the Cross, to follow *Jesus-Christ*, ye seek to be delivered from it as soon as may be, and give Ear to Men who flatter corrupt Nature. And so long as ye shall continue in this Disposition, ye will always change. But when a Person finds himself thus changeable, he may be sure it is the Devil that governs him.

FOR the good Spirit is firm and constant, and unchangeable, he is patient to wait God's Disposal,

sa, suffers and endures all Things willingly for his Service. For it would be a Delusion, to desire to enter into the Service of GOD, that we may suffer nothing; since we find ourselves obliged to suffer so much in the Service of the World, wherein Crosses are inevitable, and much heavier than can be in the Service of GOD, where a Man ought to rejoice in Sufferings, because these Sufferings serve to perfect our Souls, and the Crosses of the World afflict both the Body and the Soul.

I KNOW by Experience, the Crosses which GOD has sent me in his Service, did more comfort my Soul, than the greatest Pleasures I could take in the Service of the World. For I have an inward Consolation, when I think that *Jesus Christ* declares them blessed that suffer in his Service, saying, *Blessed are they who are persecuted for Righteousness Sake.* And if I should have suffered Crosses, Persecutions and Contempt, in the Service of the World, as I have suffered in the Service of GOD, methinks I could not have endured them: But the Resolution which I have to embrace the Cross, to follow *Christ*, makes all the Difficulties that befall me light; blessing GOD that He has made me able to follow *Jesus Christ* in Suffering.

WHEREFORE I am astonished to see you (with so many others) look back for Trifles, or some Words or Actions that did not please you, or for some Imperfections of others, which in no wise concern you, since GOD will ask an Account of you of your own State only, not that of others. So that all these Reasons ought not to make you turn back from a Resolution which you had taken, to become true Christians. For though you had not found in the Service of GOD, all your Ease and Conveniences, and had endured the Imperfections

of others, yea, the Reproaches and Contempt of your Brethren; all these Things should not have made you turn back in the Voyage of Eternity, which ye had undertaken by the Grace of GOD.

If the Desire of travelling towards Eternity, had been absolute in you both, so small Things as you met with in the Way, would not have been capable to turn you aside from it, and Crosses would have confirmed you the more in Virtue, which can never be solid in you, before it be exercised by Sufferings and Contradictions. As a Pilgrim cannot travel into far Countries without being provided with Victuals, no more can a Person travel towards Eternity, without carrying with him the Food of his Soul, which is the Cross, Sufferings and Spiritual Conversation. All which Things you might have found with us. For it is impossible in a Community of different Humours and Natures, that Persons can live without mutual Forbearance; because yourselves not being perfect more than others, it is necessary that they bear with you, and ye with them; since otherwise your several Virtues would not be exercised, nor your Faults amended, if they were not observed and admonished by others. This is the Advantage which is found in Communities; that they may exercise and admonish one another. For this Cause it is that *David* says, *It is good for Brethren to dwell together*; and that the Scripture says, *Was to him that is alone; for if he fall, there will be none to lift him up.* But he that goes out of a Community, that he may live after his own Way and be reproved by no Body, deprives himself of all these Advantages.

Ye both did leave your Country and Kindred, that ye might become true Christians: But when ye were come hither, you sought for a convenient House,

House, not willing to content yourself with such a Place as I could afford you. After this, you murmured against the Victuals which our Brethren gave you, and bought for yourselves apart. And ye did likewise take Offence at some Things which our Brethren said or did, contrary to your Sentiments, and sought Persons to murmur with you, that ye might second corrupt Nature. All those Things sufficiently declare, that ye came to *Holstein* to seek your Pleasures, as you had sought them in the World, and to take the most beautiful, and the best, if you could have had it.

WHICH a Person should never do, when he resolves to become a true Christian, because *Christ* teaches him, *To deny himself, and to take the last Place*, even then when he may easily have the first; as *Christ* did, who being LORD and Master of all that was most beautiful and best, did choose the least of all Things for his Use, taking more Pleasure in Poverty than in all Riches.

WHEREBY you may see, that you came not to *Holstein* to imitate *Christ*, but rather to live there according to the Motions of corrupt Nature; which not having according to its Wish, it hath made you turn back, and will do it yet, if ye do not resolve to make War against it, and give it the contrary of that which it desires, to the End ye may gain the *Kingdom of Heaven by Force*; which Kingdom I cannot see that ye have truly sought hitherto: Since I know by Experience, that he who seeketh the Kingdom of Heaven, is not solicitous about that which he shall eat or drink, wherewith he shall be cloathed, or in what Place he shall reside; it sufficeth him that he advances in his Voyage, without turning aside from it, to seek after a better Lodging, or a better Table: For he thinks it enough for him.

to find simply wherewith to entertain his Life, without desiring any other Thing, or so much as looking after a House where he shall lodge at Night, 'till Weariness oblige him to rest; and then he takes it as he finds it.

I TRAVELLED so when I came out of my Country, and my Father's House, to follow *Christ*, and to become a Christian. I had taken a Resolution to travel all the Day, and to rest where the Night should surprize me; and if I had found a Stable, I would have gone into it to pass the Night; and if I had not found any House, I would have reposed in the Fields. For I had no other Care, but to arrive at Eternity. All other Things were only accidental to me. I had neither Scrip, nor Money, nor any human Help, believing firmly, that God was able to preserve me in Life, even without Eating, if that should fail; as I truly found by Experience.

FOR the first Day that I came out of my Father's House, without taking a Penny with me, I travelled about ten Leagues, without Drinking or Eating, and I had neither Hunger nor Thirst, being so full that I could not drink a Drop, or eat a Morfel, that was presented to me in the House where I lodged at Night. And I esteemed myself happy when I could lodge in a Barn; where I thanked the Persons that gave me a Bundle of Straw to lie upon, and the next Day Bread and a Glass of Water for my Food; and I rejoiced in the Bottom of my Soul for the Happiness I had, to follow the Poverty of *Jesus Christ* at some Distance, after I had left the Pleasures and Conveniences of my Father's House. I did not regret the Want of his fine House, or my well-furnished Chamber; but

was afraid lest I should be known, to be forced to return thither.

If God love you, He will treat you as He did the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, who followed their Master in all Kinds of Labours; and in the End were almost all put to Death, for having followed the Truth of the Gospel.

AND now those who seek to be Disciples of the same Master, will not suffer Contempt, or any Hardship, and seek their Conveniences as much in following Him, as they did in the Service of the World: Which I cannot comprehend; since *Jesus Christ Yesterday and To-day is always the same*, and will never change. His Gospel is the last of Laws; God will give Men, we are not to expect another; and the Persons who at this Day desire to become true Christians, ought to have the same Dispositions that those of the primitive Church had; otherwise they deceive themselves as much as others, who persuade themselves, that they can become true Christians in abiding in Self-love, and seeking their Pleasures and Conveniences.

FOR ye must imitate *Jesus Christ*, that ye may be his Disciples; and ye must deny yourself to follow Him. And if ye have not a Resolution to do this, ye ought not to return to me, since my bodily Presence cannot save you, no more than all those were saved who followed *Jesus Christ* to hear his Word, seeing many of them were damned: For the Scripture tells us, that *Jesus Christ* said unto them, who said to Him that He had walked in their Streets, *I know you not*; to teach us, that He will reject those who have followed Him, and heard his Word, when they shall have not put the same in Practice.

IT

IT is very displeasing to a Traveller, to be in the Company of Persons travelling with him, who complain and murmur at all Things, saying at sometimes that the Sun is too hot, and then that the Air is too cold, that the Rain wets them, or the Dust blinds their Eyes, that the Way is too rough, too hard, or too dirty, that they are weary, and desiring to rest when it is Time to travel, being discontent that they cannot find Meat and Drink according to their Mind.

ALL these Things would be troublesome to a Pilgrim, who is accustomed joyfully, and with Patience, to suffer the Inconveniences of Travelling, and he would have Reason to say to such a Company, *He who would have his Ease should stay at Home*; because ill Accommodations is inseparable from Travelling, to which Hardships belong.

I SAY the same to all those who desire to follow me in the Voyage to Eternity, in which sensual Persons are Stones of Stumbling to me, by making the Way tedious, with their Complaints. For this Cause, I love better to travel alone towards Eternity, than to be accompanied by Persons who seek their sensual Ease and Accommodations.

I MEAN not that we must die of Hunger or Labour, because GOD doth always provide for our Necessity. And I have travelled many Years in these Ways, without ever wanting any Thing necessary for Life. But I was always content with that which GOD gave me.

AND when He gives me any Victuals, I eat them, and do not consider if they are exactly to my Taste or not: For sharp and sweet, cold and hot, are all alike to me. If I find Abundance, I take no more thereof.

thereof but what is necessary: And if I meet with Scarcity, I endure it joyfully. I take as much of Travel as I can bear, and rest when I may conveniently. When I am thirsty and have nothing to drink, I put a Pin into my Mouth and chew it to bring Spittle; and when I cannot relieve myself, I endure all with Patience, tho' it were Death itself, if God should send it.

BEHOLD the Deportment of one who travels towards Eternity. If any one will bear her Company after this Manner, he shall be acceptable to her; for if Nature be social the Spirit is yet more so, willingly uniting itself with its Like: And their Journey seems light and pleasant unto them, in discoursing together of the Felicities which they shall find at the End of their Journey, and in speaking of the shortest and easiest Ways to come at it.

THIS comforts the Soul, and makes that a Person feels neither Hunger nor Thirst, nor Weariness or bodily Inconveniency. Thus *Man lives not by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth from God.* Which a Person may find by Experience, that seriously entertains himself with Discourses of Life eternal, or with the Words of God. He shall find even his Body satisfied, which will have less Need of bodily Nourishment than it was wont to have, when he amused himself with talking of Meat and Drink, and other vain Things.

FOR GOD nourisheth both the Body and the Soul, and blestieth the bodily Food which is taken only for Necessity: So that a Person needs not take so great a Quantity thereof for preserving Health. But he that seeketh his Pleasure in Drinking and Eating, shall not find this Blessing in his Victuals.

NOT

NOT that GOD requires of us so great an Auster-
 ity as that of the ancient Hermits; who lay upon
 the Ground, having Nothing but Herbs to eat:
 Since he gives us Food and Conveniences, such as
 little Children might well subsist by: But he requires
 of them a Resignation of their Wills to His, to suf-
 fer themselves to be entirely governed by his Wis-
 dom, not seeking any Thing any more, but to
 know his holy Will, to fulfil it constantly even un-
 to Death, remaining evermore content with every
 Thing which GOD shall permit to befall them, and
 blessing Him always, as much for having little as
 for having much.

I AM told, that they who have departed from
 me, say, they found GOD every where; as well
 in being by themselves, as in the Company of Chri-
 stians. I should rejoyce if this were true; but I
 know the Devil deceives them, as he hath deceived
 you; and that they will never find true Virtue in
 staying by themselves.

If ye had had Charity, you would not have
 thought ill of the Words or Actions of our Bre-
 thren, when ye were with them: And if you had
 seriously laid to Heart the Perfection of your own
 Souls, you would not have spent your Time in ob-
 serving the Imperfections of others; you would
 have had Work enough in amending your own.
 For it is a great Defect, to expect to find more
 Virtue in another, than we have acquired ourselves.

YE ought to have had Compassion upon the De-
 fects of those, who strive to attain Christian Per-
 fection, since yourselves have so great a Difficulty
 to attain thereto, tho' you have the Desire thereof.
 Ought you not then to believe, that another hath
 also the same Difficulty, because being all born in
 Sin,

Sin, we cannot do well but by Force? And he that wrestles with his Defects should not be despised, because he has not overcome them all: But he ought to be much esteemed, who seeks to overcome them.

AND thus ought Christians to assist one another in their Combats, without reproaching them, that in so long a Time they have not yet carried the Victory; because you do not know yourselves, in how much Time you shall overcome one Imperfection. It doth not belong to us to limit a Time to any Body; because this depends upon the Grace of God, who knows better what is fitter for every one, than our short Sight can penetrate.

YE ought to be Judges of yourselves only, and to condemn your own Defects, without casting an Eye upon the Defects of others, of whom ye have not the Charge, since the Scripture doth severely threaten *those who meddle with other Mens Business.*

How could ye receive the Light of the Holy Spirit, in coming to us with an evil Eye, to spy out our Defects? Ye ought to have come with a Child-like Simplicity to learn, instead of desiring to give Orders for the Deportment of others, who seek to be governed by the Holy Spirit, and to follow his Direction; tho' in Effect they do not obey Him according to their Wish, and do not that which they would gladly do, but often that which they would not: *For the Spirit is ready, but the Flesh is weak.*

YE thought they did ill to cheapen so nicely, and look so narrowly to every Thing; tho' in Effect they did this with Reluctancy: For it is against

natural Inclination, to apply ourselves to small Things, because corrupt Nature is always proud, and would appear liberal, to the End it may be esteemed of worldly Persons, to whom it will not have their Trouble, by contradicting them, or refusing to give them that which they would have.

BUT GOD hath commanded me to resist them, and to give them nothing but that which is just and reasonable; because it is better to have their Contempt and Dislike, than to co-operate with their Fraud and Avarice: And I teach those Things which I have learned of GOD to my Children, who do not as yet follow them so much as I desire, because this is repugnant to their Nature, which would like better to give every one what they ask, and to be esteemed and honoured even of the Wicked. This is much more pleasant, and flattens the Senses, which love Ease and Honour.

YET I am not covetous: If GOD saw in my Soul a Coveting of temporal Things, He could not give me his Grace, and his Lights in so great Abundance as He doth, and my Soul would not be possessed by Him: Because GOD and Sin are two Contraries which always drive out one another, and cannot dwell together, no more than in Nature Fire abideth in Water. There is a greater Disproportion between Covetousness and the Love of GOD, than between Fire and Water.

WHEREFORE no Body should expect ever to have the Love of GOD, so long as his Heart is covetous.

MANY indeed think it is Niggardliness to look too narrowly to small Matters, that I will not willingly

lingly suffer a Pin to be lost, because they know the Covetous do so also; and measuring me they do not penetrate from what Principle this Care of preserving all Things doth proceed.

I WAS by my natural Inclination disposed to Negligence and Prodigality, and did not look to small Things, because I had what I desired for myself or others, to whom I gave willingly, to be esteemed and loved by them. And my corrupt Nature judged itself happy, in being able to give freely to every one, *For there is more Honour in giving than in receiving.*

AND I exceeded in these two Vices, to wit, in Negligence and Prodigality. For from my Infancy I was so careless that I lost my Books in the School, my Aprons, my Shoes, and all Things that were not sewed or strongly tied, for which my Mother was often angry with me and chastised me, without being able to make me amend. I was likewise so liberal that I gave all the Meat and Fruit which was brought me to the School, to poor Children, and loved rather to suffer Hunger, than to refuse any Thing to them that asked it of me. And when I was come to the Age of Understanding I continued thus, yea exceeded in this Liberality; I gave not only that whereof I had Abundance, but also that which I had Need of myself. For being as yet young in my Father's House, I used not to eat the delicate Meat which was served up there, but kept it together with the Wine to carry to poor sick Persons, to whom I carried the clean Linnen of my Bed to be used by them. And when I had the Management of my own Goods, I dispensed them to those that had Need of them. I lent to some, and gave to others,

'till I was forced to abstain from so doing, thro' the Wickedness of those to whom I had lent, who studied to steal from me, and to live in Sloth and Gluttony with the Money which I gave and lent them. And thus I was forced to give over lending to my Neighbour, after I had lost considerable Sums which I had lent them; tho' all their Wickedness could not make me forsake the Liberality which I had in my Soul. For I resolved to take poor young Girls into my Lodging, and to instruct them in the Fear of God, teaching them a Trade whereby they might honestly gain their Living, believing my Liberality could not be better employed, (since I saw before my Eyes to what my Alms were applied) than for the Good of the Soul and Body of my Neighbours; and I resolved to employ all the Revenue which God had lent me that Way, believing that this would be acceptable to Him, and that I might well exercise the Inclination which I had to do Good to others.

BUT God hath since made me see, that there is yet something more perfect than this Liberality, which ministered only to the temporal Accommodation of Men, who did not serve God better with my Assistance, than they had done without it. On the contrary, they took Occasion from thence to offend God more, as well by Ingratitude, as by Sloth, Luxury and Gluttony. For so long as I gave them wherewith to live, they would not labour, because Nature is so slothful that it would never work, if without Labour it could have what it desires.

INASMUCH that God having made me know these Things, I determined to change my Resolution, and to overcome, by Virtue, my natural Negli-

Negligence and Liberality, to the End I might study, for the Time to come, to please GOD more than I had done Men.

I NOW love rather to endure their Contempt, than to disobey GOD, who commands me, *to fulfil all Righteousness, to do all Things in Order, to put every Thing to profit for the Good of my Neighbour.* And altho' these Persons will not receive these Instructions, yet I will fulfil them to the utmost of my Power; knowing that it is not just to give the Goods dedicated to GOD, to sensual Persons, who would not employ them but to commit Sin.

I CANNOT therefore with Peace of Conscience endure in my Company a Person that by his Excess or Sloth brings Loss, Disorder, and Confusion into my Household Affairs; I must either reprove them for this, or else dismiss them, otherwise I co-operate with their Sloth and Negligence. And I have yet more Reason to dismiss them, when they will needs make me understand that they do well in their Way, and that I do ill in sitting them so narrowly, meaning to teach me that it were better to suffer them to follow their unruly Passions, than to reprove them, or to be displeased with them.

CONSIDER now if I have not Reason to restrain myself from giving to the Wicked, and if I have not likewise Ground to pay as little as I can for the Things that I buy, or to Persons whom I employ in any Work, when they are covetous and unfaithful, seeking to make me pay more for Things than they are worth. For the same Charity should be exercised toward all Kinds of Persons,

sons, and the Righteousness which *Jesus Christ* hath recommended, should be put in Practice on all Occasions. And you ought not to consider, if the Person be rich or poor, whom you pay, or from whom you buy, but you are only to take Notice if you pay the just Price of that which you buy, or if you give the just Wages of the Work done, according to the Rate of the Place where you are. For if you give more, you contribute to the Frauds, to the Lies and Cheats, which they put upon you, who would make you pay more than the just Price of the Things that you have Need of; whether it be their Labour or Merchandize: For their Wickedness increaseth, according as you give easily to the Wicked that which he desires; and if To-day you give him a Penny more than he should have, To-morrow he would have two more, and the next Day three, and afterwards four or five, and this will increase to Infinity, because Covetousness is insatiable.

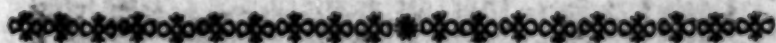
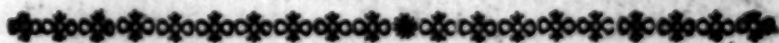
WE must not then give our Goods to the Wicked that offend God by those Gifts, nor pay covetous and deceitful Merchants all they ask: For they do not only ask the just Value of Things, but the double, yea, thrice the double and more, if they perceive you have not Knowledge of that you are to buy, or that you are in great Need of their Wares: Then will they straiten you, and cut you even to the Bone, or they will leave you in your Necessity.

I HAVE seen this by Experience; Merchants would not give me their Merchandize unless for more than the Worth, when they saw I had Need of it: Tho' this is directly against Charity, which obliges all Men to assist their Neighbour in his Need,

Need, whether poor or rich ; it is an universal Law, to which all Men in general are subjected. So that if a Person, be what they will, good or bad, die for Want of our Assistance, when we know their Need, we are Murderers before God, as as guilty before Him, as if we had killed him with a Knife.

April the 28th,
1676.

End of the Treatise on SOLID VIRTUE.



Need, whether poor or rich; it is an universal
 Law, to which all Men in general are subjected.
 So that it is a Point, & what they will, good or
 bad, die for Want of our Assistance, & yet we
 know their Need, we are inhuman before God,
 as as guilty before Heaven, & have killed him
 with a Knife.

6 JY 64

April 28th 1764

End of the 1st Part of Solid Virtue.

AN
EXTRACT
FROM A
SERMON

PREACHED

At CRIPPLEGATE,

BY

Dr. *SAMUEL ANNESLEY.*



EXTRACT

FROM A

SERMON

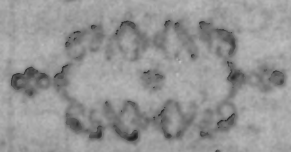
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DR. SAMUEL ANNESTON

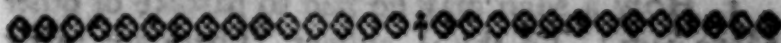




A

S E R M O N.

*How must we reprove, that we may not
partake of other Mens Sins?*



1 TIM. v. 22.

*Neither be Partaker of other Mens Sins, keep
thyself pure.*

THIS Caution is not intended to Ministers only, neither is it to be confined to the Case of Ordination; but as *Christ* said upon another Occasion, *What I say unto you, I say unto all*: So here, what *St. Paul* writes to *Timothy*, he speaks to all: A private Christian as well as a Minister, must be sure to take Heed, that he be not Partaker of other Mens Sins.

BUT

BUT how must we reprove, and not partake of other Mens Sins? This Case is double.

1. ABOUT Participation of other Mens Sins.
2. ABOUT reprovng of other Mens Sins.

AND, *First*, It ought to be every Man's Care, not to partake of any Man's Sin. In the Handling of which, I shall endeavour to shew you,

1. How many Ways a Man may be said to partake of other Mens Sins.

2. WHY a Christian must be careful not to partake of them. I shall

3. APPLY it.

1. How a Man may be said to partake of other Mens Sins: To this I answer, There are many Ways. I will name some of them.

THERE are eight Ways especially noted in Scripture, by which a Man is made Partaker of the Sins of others.

1. BY Contrivance: And this is in a high Degree to be guilty of other Mens Sins: Thus *Jonadab* was guilty of *Amnon's* Incest, by his subtle contriving of that Wickedness, 2 Sam. xiii. 5.

WHEN a Man shall wittingly and willingly spread a Snare in his Brother's Way, and either drive him in by Provocation, or decoy him in by Allurement, he makes himself a Partaker of his Sin: So to provoke a Man to Passion, to tempt a Person to Drunkenness or Uncleanneſs, to draw Souls into Error, Heresy,

Heresy, or Blasphemy; this is to adopt the Sin, and to make it a Man's own.

You know the Story there, 2 Sam. xi. *Uriah* was slain, and the *Ammonites* slew him; but because *David* contrived all this, the Scripture tells us that *David* was the Murderer, 2 Sam. xii. 9. *Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the Sword, thou has slain him with the Sword of the Children of Ammon.* St. *Paul* tells us, he was a *Blasphemer, and a Persecutor*, 1 Tim. i. 13. We do not read of any Blasphemy that *Paul* uttered, in all the Bible: Oh but, says he, *I compelled the Saints to blaspheme*, Acts xxvi. 11. There was his Blasphemy, in compelling others to blaspheme.

To incite and provoke any to sinful Practices, to seduce and solicit any to erroneous Opinions; is to be double guilty of those Sins, once by Infection, and again by Instigation.

IN a Word, he that shall either hinder another of doing that Good which is commanded; or shall further another to the doing of that Evil which is prohibited, is justly chargeable with both their Sins.

2. By Compliance: By consenting and complying with Sin and Sinners, a Man makes himself Partaker; though he has no Hand in it, yet if he has a Heart in it, though he does not act it, yet if he likes it and loves it, though he does not persecute God's Saints and Ministers, yet if he saith, *Aha! aba! so we would have it*, it is enough to make him guilty before God.

SAUL had no Hand in St. *Stephen's* Death, he did not cast one Stone at him; but because he looked on with Approbation, therefore was he

esteemed guilty of his Blood: So himself confesses, when GOD had awakened him, *Acts xxii. 20. When the Blood of thy Martyr Stephen was shed, I was consenting to his Death.*

GOD looks not upon the outward Man so much as upon the Heart, according to the Frame and Inclination of this, according as the Pulse of the Heart beats, so is every Man in the Account of GOD. If Sin has once storm'd the Fort-Royal of the Heart, though it never appears in the Out-works, the Garrison is lost: That which is upon the Stage of the Heart after Consent, is as truly acted in the Sight of GOD, as that which appears in the outward Man by Commission. *Matt. xv. 19. Out of the Heart proceeds Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witnesses, Blasphemies.* From the Hand proceeds Murders and Thefts; from the Eye proceeds Adulteries and Fornications; and from the Tongue proceeds false Witnesses and Blasphemies: But the Heart is the Forge of all.

You may murder a Man with a Thought, as they say the Basilisk will with a Look, such a poisonous Thing a wicked Heart is: And let me tell you, it is the Heart-murder, the Heart-adultery, the Heart-blasphemy, and the Heart-iniquity, that GOD especially judges, according to that well known Place, *Jer. xvii. 10. I the LORD search the Heart, to give to every Man according to his Ways, i. e. according to what I see acted upon the Stage of the Heart: He does not only judge the Actions, but the very Intentions.*

3. By Connivance: By dissembling and winking at others in their Wickedness, Men become guilty of others Sins, *Isaiah ix. 16. The Leaders of this People cause them to err: It is in the Hebrew, The Blessers*

Blessers of this People cause them to err. Beloved, the Blessers of Men in Wickedness, are the Leaders of Men in Wickedness; he that shall wink at Men in Sins, when he knows they do wickedly, makes himself Captain and Master of Mis-rule among them. And thus we are too prone to be Partakers of Magistrates Sins, and Governors Sins, and great Mens Sins, Patrons Sins, and Landlords Sins. If the Grandees of the World profane the Sabbath, dishonour God, scoff at Religion; out of a base cowardly Spirit, or out of a carnal covetous Heart, we let them alone, it may be applaud them: Oh! this is to be deeply guilty of other Mens Sins.

4. **By Sufferance:** By permitting the Sins of others, so we become guilty, by suffering others to sin, whom we are bound in Duty, and may be able by Authority, to hinder: And thus as in the former Particular, we are guilty of Magistrates Sins, in this Particular Magistrates oft-times become guilty of our Sins. Kings, and Rulers, and subordinate Magistrates become oft-times deeply guilty of their Peoples Sins, *namely*, by Sufferance, by tolerating Heresies and Blasphemies on the one Hand, or by suffering Wickedness and Profaneness on the other.

SABBATH-BREAKING abounds; let it pass, says the Mayor of a Town: Drunkenness abounds; let it alone, says the Justice of Peace: Profaneness abounds; let it alone, says the Minister. Sirs, if it should be thus, this were to bear the Sins of a whole Parish, and a whole Country; and a whole Nation upon a Man's Back at once.

5. **By Influence of bad Example:** By setting bad Examples for others to imitate, so Men are guilty of others Sins; as when Children sin by the Examples of their Parents, those very Parents are guilty

of their Childrens Sin. So we have some Families that inherit the Lusts, as well as the Lands of their Ancestors; Parents swear and curse, and so do Children; Parents are Drunkards, and so are Children; Parents are unclean, and so are Children; as they make them rich by their Livings, so they make them wretched and debauched by their Lives: This is to make themselves Partakers of all their Sins. So when People sin by the Looseness of their Minister, that Minister is guilty of those very Sins that the People so commit; which made *Austin* so jealous of himself in this Case, that it was his constant Prayer, *Libera me, Domine, à peccatis meis alienis*; LORD, deliver me from mine other Mens Sins; those Sins that others have committed thro' my Carelessness and Incogitancy.

He that sets an evil Example, sins not alone, he draws Hundreds it may be into Sin after him. He is like a Man that sets his own House on Fire; it burns many of his Neighbours, and he is to be answerable for all the Ruins.

6. By Inference from a bad Example, or by Imitation: So a Man is guilty of another Man's Sin, not only by Pattern, in setting bad Examples, but also by Practice, in following bad Examples: And thus, that Man that will be drunk because another was drunk, or that breaks the Sabbath because others do the like, is not only guilty of his own particular Sin, but he is guilty also of their Sins whom he imitates.

HENCE it is that GOD is said to visit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children; because they make themselves guilty by Imitation; and this may be a Key to unlock that Place of the Apostle, 2 Tim. iii.

13. Evil Men and Seducers shall wax worse and worse

worse, deceiving and being deceived. Deceivers are worse, but the Deceived are worse and worse; if they see a bad Example, and will not avoid it, but copy it, they are worse than worse. The Deceiver is guilty of the Deceived's Sin by Instigation, and the Deceived is guilty of the Deceiver's Sin by Imitation.

AND this is the intricate, perplexed Labyrinth, into which Sin doth precipitate careless Sinners. If thou committest that Sin, which none before committed but thee, thou art guilty of all the Sins of future Generations by thy Example, as *Adam* was in the World, and *Jeroboam* in *Israel*. And if thou committest any Sin, because others have committed it before, thou art guilty of all the Sins of former Generations, by thy Imitation: Witness that dreadful Place, *Matt. xxiii. 34, 35, 36.* *Wherefore behold I send unto you Prophets and wise Men, and Scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your Synagogues, and persecute from City to City. Mark; that upon you may come all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth, from the Blood of righteous Abel unto the Blood of Zacharias the Son of Barachias, whom ye slew (though slain in Jehoash's Reign, almost nine hundred Years before, yet ye slew) between the Temple and the Altar. Verily, I say unto you, all these Things shall come upon this Generation: And why? Because they sinned after the Similitude of their Fathers Transgression.* Oh! what Matter of Humiliation is this to every Soul that continues in any known Sin.

7. BY Countenance: If by Society and Company with wicked Men we countenance them, we become Partakers of their Sins. We cannot be intimate with such, without contracting their Guilt

to our own Souls. It is true indeed, all Commerce with such is not forbidden, for then (as the Apostle says) *we must go out of the World;* but intimate Society is, upon this Account.

We read in Scripture, where wicked Men have often fared better for the Good, as *Laban* for *Jacob*, and *Potiphar* for *Joseph*, and *Ahab* for *Jehoshaphat*: But we never read that good Men fared better for the Company of the Wicked. *Psalms cxix. 115. Depart from me (saith David) for I will keep the Commandments of my GOD:* It is a very hard Matter to keep wicked Company, and to keep the Commandment of GOD together.

8. By Maintenance: By upholding and encouraging Men in their Sins, though thou never committest them thyself, yet thou art guilty, *2 John 11. He that biddeth him GOD-speed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds.* Though thou dost not commit it, yet if thou dost applaud it, thou art a Partner; if thou art not the Father, yet thou art the Guardian of it.

Thus I have done with the first Thing, how many Ways we may be Partakers of other Mens Sins: There are many more might be named, as by hindering Good, by excusing Evil, by administering Occasion, by not reprovings, not mourning, not reclaimings, &c. But these, and many more, are but under Sprigs from the general Branches that I have opened.

CONSIDER we, 2. Why a Christian must be careful not to partake of other Mens Sins? I answer,

1. Our

1. OUT of a Principle of Charity to our Brethren;

2. OUT of a Principle of Pity to ourselves;

3. OUT of a Principle of Piety to God.

1. OUT of Charity to our Brethren; that we be not Instruments to promote their Ruin and Destruction! For, to partake of other Mens Sins, though it does more burthen us, yet it does never a whit ease them, but does rather harden them, and confirm them in their Practices; for Company in Sin makes Men act it with greater Confidence. Now this is to do the Devil's Part in the Habit of a Friend. Sirs, we must be charitable, Charity is the Golden Rule, Charity is the Bond of Perfection. Now, if it be a Piece of Charity to help up our Brother's Ox or Ass, when he is fallen into a Ditch; sure it is more Charity to do as much for his Soul. *Jude 23. Others save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire.* Sin is the deep Ditch of the Soul, and Sin is the Hell-fire of the Soul, as it were; here should be lifting and plucking indeed.

THE Neglect of this Duty of keeping one another from Sin, the Scripture calls an hating of our Brother, *Lev. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart, thou shalt not suffer Sin upon him.* I observe in Company, that if many Persons sit together by a Fire, and a Spark fly upon any one of them, every one is ready to shake or beat it off; and why should not we be as friendly and charitable to Mens Souls, when Sin, which is as Hell-flakes, lies burning upon their Souls?

2. OUT of Pity to ourselves; that we may keep ourselves from the Blood of other Mens Souls, and secure ourselves from the Judgments of other Mens Sins.

Sins. For the former, says St. Paul, *Acts xx. 26, 27. I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God:* Had the Apostle connived at, or consented to their Sins, God would have made Inquisition for their Blood at his Hands. For the latter, says Jacob, *Gen. xlix. 5, 6, 7. Simeon and Levi are Brethren, Instruments of Cruelty are in their Habitations. Oh! my Soul; come not into their Secrets; unto their Assembly, mine Honour be not thou united. Why? I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* He would not have a Hand in their sinful Union, because he would not have a Share in their dreadful Division; they were united in Sin, and they must be divided in Punishment.

3. OUT of Piety towards GOD; GOD forbids it, nay, GOD absolutely abhors and condemns it, *Psalms l. 18, 21. When thou sawest a Thief, thou consentedst with him, and hast been Partakers with the Adulterers; these Things hast thou done, but I will reprove, and set them in Order before thee.* This Sin is a Breach of all the Law at once, being against the Rule of Charity. He that hath his own Sins alone, doth only commit them; but he that takes other Mens Sins, doth highly approve them; and this greatly dishonours GOD: It is worse partaking of Sin, than committing of Sin, *Rom. i. 32. They do not only do the same, (saith the Apostle) but have Pleasure in them that do them.* Wherefore Zelophebad's Daughters pleaded in Mitigation of their Father's Offence, that he died in his own Sin; He was not Partner with Korah, but died in his own Sin. It is worse to be a Partner, than to be an Actor.

I PROCEED, 3. to the Application.

AND (1.) is there such a Thing as partaking of other Mens Sins after this Manner?

1. Hence you may be informed of the Equity and Justice of GOD's proceeding in Punishment: You oft-times see GOD punishing one Man's Sin upon another, or at least hear of it, and you think it strange. This Clue will conduct you through the Labyrinth, they have been some Way or other Partakers of those Sins, either by Contrivance, or by Compliance, or by Connivance, one Way or other, else GOD would never punish them. If they have not been Actors, they have been Abettors: *Shall not the Judge of all the World do right?* GOD punishes Children for the Sins of their Parents, *Exod. xxxiv. 7.* but those Children have been Partakers certainly, by Approbation, it may be by Imitation: GOD punisheth Servants for the Sins of their Masters, *Gen. xii. 17.* but sure the Servants were Partakers by consenting, it may be by executing: GOD punishes Wives for the Sins of their Husbands, *Gen. xx. 18.* but those Wives were Partakers still by admitting, by inducing: GOD punishes Ministers for the Sins of the People, *Ezek. xxxiii. 8.* but then those Ministers are Partakers, by not instructing, by not reprovings; still the Justice of GOD is vindicated.

2. HENCE be informed what Piety, and Strictness, and Watchfulness, is more especially required of those that have the Care of others, i. e. Kings and Parents, Masters, Magistrates, and Ministers; they should be exemplary in Godliness: They have Care of other Mens Souls, and therefore they should look well to their own. The Want of this was her Crime and Complaint,
Cant.

Cant. i. 6. Oh! those that are Keepers of Vineyards had Need to have special Care of their own Vineyard.

3. HENCE take an Account why the Wicked so hate the Good, and reproach and revile them; it is this, They will not be Partakers of their Sins, they will not commit them, neither will they connive at them: *Ahab* hates *Micaiah*, and himself gives the Reason, because he reprov'd him, *1 Kings xxii. 8.* *I hate him, he never speaks well of me.* *Herod* hates *John Baptist* because he reproves him. No Wonder that Ministers of all Kind of Men in the World, are most hated; the Case is plain, because they are Reprovers. Good Ministers are wicked Mens Reprovers, and wicked Men are good Ministers Reproachers. *1 Pet. iv. 4.* *They think it strange you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you.*

4. HERE is Matter of Reproof and Humiliation this Day for our Want of Watchfulness in this Kind. Oh, which of us can say, that we are free from the Guilt of other Men's Sins? Every Man may cast this Reproof and Lamentation at his own Conscience, and there let it Stick. Parents every one, ah my Children's Sins; Masters, ah my Servant's Sins; Ministers, ah my People's Sins; Rulers, ah my Subject's Sins. Oh let us deeply mourn for this and more frequently and fervently pray that Prayer, *LORD forgive me other Mens Sins.*

2. THE second Use is of Exhortation and Caution together. Is it so, that it ought to be every Man's Care, not to partake of any Man's Sin?

Q^H

OH Christians! let me intreat you then to be very mindful of this Duty; be persuaded, beloved, and the LORD persuade you to be tenderly careful and watchful, that you do not partake of other Mens Sins. These are infectious Times and Places that we live in, and Multitudes there are that catch Diseases from others; but let me tell you, bodily Diseases are not half so catching as Sin.

SIN is an infectious, contagious, pestilential Plague, that spreads mightily in the World: Oh take Heed, take Heed that the Guilt of other Mens Sins be not one Day put upon your Account.

GIVE me Leave to prosecute this,

1. By laying down some Arguments to press this Caution and Exhortation.

2. By pointing what Sins especially you must not partake of.

3. By shewing you how you may so manage, as not to be Partakers of other Mens Sins.

I. To lay down the Arguments.

1. CONSIDER, you have Sins enough of your own, you have no Reason to partake of other Mens; it is cruel to add Affliction to your Bonds. *Jesus Christ* had no Sins of his own, and therefore He could, and did bear ours; though He did not partake of any Man's Sins, all were his by Imputation, *Isa. liii. 6. He hath laid upon Him the Iniquities of us all*, but none were his by Perpetration or Participation. It is not so with us, alas! We have Sins enough of our own; Man, Woman, thine own Pride will damn thee, if thou dost not repent; and

and thine own Formality, and Worldliness, and Hardness of Heart; thou hast no Need to take the Sins of others; said the Daughters of Zelophebad, our Father died in his own Sin. Ay, that is enough to kill a Man, and damn a Man, his own Sin.

2. CONSIDER, It is a most monstrous Sin to partake of other Mens Sins. The Apostle speaks of committing Iniquity with Greediness, Eph. iv. 19. *Sirs, there is no such greedy Sinning as this, for a Man to lick up, and swallow down, and devour other Mens Sins.* Oh! Christian, this Sin of devouring other Mens Sins, is a dreadful Sin, a devilish Sin, and therefore take Heed of it.

3. CONSIDER, If you partake of other Mens Sins, you shall certainly partake of other Mens Plagues, Rev. xviii. 4. *Come out of her, my People, says GOD, namely, from Babylon, that you be not Partakers of her Sins, that so ye receive not of her Plagues.* See Prov. xiii. 20. *A Companion of Fools shall be destroyed; not only Fools shall be destroyed, but a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed:* If you sin with them, you shall suffer with them, and you shall suffer more because of them. This will be the Shrieking and Howling in Hell among damned Souls, one to another; "Oh Woe the Day that ever I saw thy Face! Oh that ever I saw thy Face! Thou hast brought me hither, and thou hast brought me hither;" and so they will torment one another to all Eternity.

2. WHAT Sins we must especially take Heed of partaking of?

ANSWER, Of all Sin whatsoever, 1 *Thess. v. 22.* *Abstain from all Appearance of Evil;* but especially

of three Sorts of Sins, which may be called Epidemical Plagues.

1. Church-Sins, 2. National-Sins, 3. Family-Sins. But I shall speak nothing of the first, but little of the second, and most to the third.

AMONG National-Sins, especially take Heed of Profaneness; this is obvious, this is an universal spreading Plague, that is like to infect the whole Kingdom, if GOD does not in Mercy prevent it. There is a Deluge of Profaneness breaking in on every Side, Swearing, Drinking, Whoring, Sabbath-breaking, Scoffing, and Mocking at Religion. Oh take Heed, of partaking here!

2. FAMILY-SINS, we must have a Care of partaking, and so much the more watchful must we be, in that Family-Sins of all Sins are most catching and infectious: As it is with bodily Diseases, if one be sick in an House, they of the Family are likest to catch the Distemper, because of their intimate Converse: So if there be an any predominant Lust lurking in a Family, all are apt to be infected with it, if they are not marvellously circumspect and watchful.

AND therefore Parents, and Masters, and Governors of Families had Need to be Reformers both of themselves, and all under their Charge, as they desire to have their Souls and Consciences free from the Guilt of other Mens Sins.

PLATO seeing a Child do Mischief in the Streets, went forthwith and corrected his Father for it; that Father that does not correct his Child when he does amiss, is justly corrected for his Faults, and it is the Pattern of GOD's judicial Proceedings, as He

visits the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, who imitate them: So he visits the Iniquities of the Children upon the Fathers, who countenance and indulge them. *Jacob* was accountable to *Laban* for the whole Flock, not a Sheep or a Lamb lost or torn, but it was required at his Hands, *Gen. xxxi. 39.* Thus must Family-Governors be accountable to God for every Lamb in the Fold, for every Child in the Family, for every Servant in the House. God will one Day cry aloud in thine Ears, *Quintili Vare, redde legiones*: Husband, Father, Master, Wife, give an Account of thy Husbandship; give an Account of thy Fathership; give an Account of thy Mastership; give an Account of thy Wifeship. This made *Jeshua* undertake for his House, as well as for himself, *Josh. xxiv. 15.* And this made *David* careful of his House, as well as his Heart, *Psal. ci. 2.* *I will walk within my House, with a perfect Heart*; not only with a perfect Heart, but in his House with a perfect Heart; to reform his Family, that that may be the Church of God; as well as to reform himself, that he may be the Temple of God.

AN how many Families are there, whose Houses are not the Church of God, but the Synagogue of *Satan* rather. It is said of *Noah's Ark*, that it was pitched within and without: Such is the Condition of many a Man's House; it is pitched within and without, nothing but the Pollutions of Sin in every Room, and Passage, and Corner. Idleness stands at the Door; Unconscionableness walks in the Shop; Covetousness lurks in the Counting-House; Luxury sits at the Table; Pride looks out at the Window; Wantonness lodges in the Bed; all pitchy and filthy both within and without.

AND

AND therefore, for the LORD's Sake, out with all this Rubbish, if it should be found in your Families: Here delight to have your Houses clean, and hereupon sweep them, and wash them, and rub them: Oh that you would be as careful to cleanse your Families from Sin, as you are to cleanse your Houses from Dirt; how soon would this great City become an Habitation of Righteousness, and a Mountain of Holiness; how would this Family-Reformation prevent the Guilt of Family-Sins, and keep out Family-Distractions, and set up Family-Watchfulness and Family-Correction. Set about Family-Reading, and Family-Conference, and especially Family-Prayer; that all your Houses may be like GOD's House: You know His is called an *House of Prayer*, Isa. lvi. 7. So should yours be Houses of Prayer all of them; if they be not, let me tell you, they are no better than Dens of Thieves. Saith *Christ*, Matt. xxi. 13. *My House shall be called a House of Prayer, but you have made it a Den of Thieves.* There is no Medium betwixt these two; if your Houses be not Houses of Prayer, they are certainly Dens of Thieves; if you do not pray to GOD for your Mercies, before you receive them, and praise GOD for your Mercies, when you enjoy them, you do but rob GOD of his Mercies; they are not given, but thrown; and snatched, rather than received.

3. IN the last Place, we come to consider, How we must so carry it, as not to partake of other Mens Sins.

AND, 1. Exercise an holy Jealousy over others, especially thy Relations; and this is the Way to deliver thy Soul from their Sins. *Job* sacrificing for his Children, said, *It may be they have sinned,* Job i. 5.

2. WATCH against the Sins of others, have your Eyes about you; take Heed of contriving, complying, winking at them, if it be in your Power, take Heed of suffering them.

THIS is the Direction in the Text, *Keep thyself pure*, take Heed of infectious Places, and infectious Practices, and infectious Company.

3. PRAY against them; pray against Profaneness, pray *Augustine's Prayer*, *LORD deliver me from other Mens Sins*.

4. MOURN for them; mourn for the Sins of the Nation, and mourn for the Sins of thy Relations; for the Sins of thy Brethren in their Obstinacy, that they will not be reformed. *Christ* came to sinful *Jerusalem* with weeping Eyes, and with a mourning Heart. *David* mourned for the Wickedness of the Times that he saw, *Psalms* cxix. 136. *Many walk*, (says *Paul*) *of whom I tell you weeping*.

THUS did GOD's People of old free themselves from National-Sins, and particular Mens Sins: When they could not be Reformers, they turned Mourners: And see how prevalent this is with GOD; these Mourners are the only People to deliver a Nation, or at least to deliver themselves from the Sin and Plagues of a Nation, when GOD makes an overflowing Scourge to pass through, *Ezek.* ix. 4. On the other Side, not mourning for the Sins of others, makes us adopt and espouse the Sins of others, *Dan.* v. 22.

5. REPROVE them. If we would not partake of the Sins of others, we must reprove the Sins of others; so the Apostle saith expressly, *Eph.* v. 11. *intimating*,

intimating, that you certainly approve, if you do not reprove them. Reprove Heresy, Blasphemy, Drunkenness, Oaths, Sabbath-breaking, Unclean-ness, and every Sin you hear or see committed.

BUT this Sword of Reproof is a very dangerous Weapon, if it be not rightly handled: There is required great Skill, Prudence, Wisdom, and Watchfulness, to a successful managing of it. He that would fasten this Nail of Reproof in the Conscience of his offending Brother, had Need be a wise Man. To this End I shall give you these Rules.

1. HE that reproves another, must be careful that himself be blameless, as much as may be; otherwise he is not acting his Charity, but bewraying his Hypocrisy. There are two Things couched in this:

1. A MAN must be faultless in Reference to Sin in general, as much as may be, that will reprove another. It behoves that Man that will reprove others, to be very upright and circumspect in all Things; and then he may reprove with greater Advantage, Authority, and Efficacy. *Let the Righteous smite me*, saith David. A Man of a strict and severe Life, and religious Conversation, carries a Kind of a Majesty and Authority with him, at which the guilty Consciences of Sinners cannot but recoil. And then,

2. A MAN must be blameless in Reference to that Sin he reproves especially; else, in healing his Brother, he doth but stab himself; if thou reprovest Pride in others, and art proud thyself; Covetousness, and art covetous thyself; Drunkenness, and art a Drunkard thyself, thou dost but like David in Nathan's Parable, pronounce the Sen-

tence of thine own Condemnation. But here I must enter one Caution, none is exempted from this Duty for Unfitness; no, *this thou oughtest to have done, and not to have left the other undone.*

2. — As he must take Heed that himself be faultless, so he must be sure that his Brother be faulty: For otherwise it is not to reprove him, but to reproach him; and so instead of doing a Christian Duty, a Man commits a devilish Sin; he becomes an Accuser of the Brethren, instead of a Reprover of the Brethren. And here are likewise two Things to be considered:

1. IT must be a Truth that thou reprovest him for.

2. IT must be a Sin that thou reprovest him for.

1. A CONJECTURE, or Imagination, or Jealousy, or Rumour, or Hearsay, is not Ground sufficient for Reproof; for all these may be false, and the Rule of Charity is, *Every Man is presum'd to be good, 'till he is prov'd to be evil*: But verily the Way of the World is far otherwise; we deal with our Brethren as the persecuting Pagans did with the Primitive Christians, put them into Lions Skins and Bears Skins, and then bait them and tear them to Pieces. Alas! the poor Christians were harmless meek Lambs, but they disguised them, and so abused them. Thus it is now; Christians are apt and ready to put their poor Brethren into I know not what Kind of monstrous Shapes, of their own imagining and devising, or else of other Mens reporting, and without more ado they fall upon them.

2. IT

2. It must be a Breach of some Command affirmative or negative; either the Omission of that which is good, or the Commission of that which is evil.

3. He must manage his Reproof to sincere Ends; must take Heed that his Aim be upright and honest: Take Heed of mingling any Wild-Fire of Pride or Vain-Glory, or Love of contradicting and controlling others, with thy Zeal of Reproving. This Heat must be a holy Heat, a Fire of the Sanctuary, as free from the Smoke of By-Ends as may be, purely for God's Glory, and out of Hatred to Sin, and out of Love to the Salvation of thy Brother's Soul.

4. He must manage his Reproof in fit Season. There is a Time to speak, and a Time to be silent: Reproof is a Duty grounded upon an affirmative Precept. Now it is well observed by Divines, that affirmative Precepts bind *semper*, but not *ad semper*; we must always reprove, but not reprove always; it is a constant Duty, but it must be done in a seasonable Opportunity. There are certain *mollia fandi Tempora*, Words upon the Wheels, as *Solomon* calls them, that are like Apples of Gold; and let me tell you, Christians, one Word spoke in Season, is worth a thousand other Words. Now it is impossible to define and determine all the Nicks of Time wherein a Man should strike in with a Reproof; for this must be left to the Wisdom and Experience of every Christian, that makes it his Business to be his Brother's Keeper; and let him assure himself, he must expect to lose many an Admonition, shoot many an Arrow of Reproof, as *Jonathan* did his, under and over, on this Side and the other Side, before he hit the Mark.

I. He

1. HE must take a Season wherein the Offender is capable of Reproof. If a Man be drunk, we must stay 'till he be sober. So if a Man be all in a Heat of Passion, we must stay, and come to him, as GOD did to *Adam*, in the Cool of the Day, when the Fit is over.

2. WE must take a Season wherein we have Occasion to commend a Man for Something, and then reprove him for his Fault; Sir, you are thus and thus; oh! but if you would but mend this and that, how excellent it would be!

3. WE must do it as soon as ever we can, and the sooner the better; a green Wound is easier healed than an old Sore.

4. If you have long waited for fit Seasons, and yet cannot find them, we had better make a Breach upon one's Prudence, than one's Conscience; Discretion then must give Place to Necessity, out with it, and leave the Success to GOD.

5. HE must manage his Reproof with due Conditions and Qualifications. And there are seven Properties of that Reproof that will in all Likelihood benefit our Brother, and secure ourselves from Participation of his Sins.

1. WE must reprove seriously and in good Earnest, so as to knock the Nail up to the Head in the Conscience of the Sinner. In our Reproofs, of our Brother, we should charge him Home; these Things thou hast done, there is no denying; *Thou art the Man*, says *Nathan* unto *David*. *This Jesus whom ye have crucified*, says *Peter* to the Jews. And thus we should set Things in Order before him;

him; Sir, is not this and that highly to dishonour God, to shame your Profession, to impair your Body, to wound your Conscience, and to damn your precious and immortal Soul? And therefore, for the LORD's Sake, think of it, and amend it.

2. WE must reprove impartially, without Respect to Persons. Good Men, if they miscarry, must be reprov'd as well bad Men. If *Peter* temporize, *Paul* will not spare him, nor *Barnabas* neither, they shall hear of it, *Gal. ii.* Great Men, be they never so great, should be admonish'd as well as others, so long as they are under the great God, and subject to great Failings; Kings, and Nobles, and Magistrates, as well as inferior Persons. *Nathan* reprov'd *David*, tho' a King; and so did *Elijah*, *Ahab*; and *Nehemiah* reprov'd the Nobles and Rulers for Usury, and Sabbath-prophanation. Certainly, if any be fit to teach great Men, they are as fit to reprove them, for they must go together, *2 Tim. iv. 2.* It is the great Unhappiness of Princes and Nobles that they have so many Flatterers, and so few Reprovers.

3. WE must reprove discretely, making a Difference between Man and Man; for though it is true, that all are to be reprov'd, that are Offenders, especially within the Pale of the Church, yet all must not be handled in the same Manner; some will do more with a Rod, than others will do with a Scorpion: Some must be dealt withal with Lenitives, others with Corrosives; some gently reprov'd, others sharply rebuked, according to the Tenderness or Stubbornness of their Disposition, and according to the Nature and Quality of their Offences; and here Abundance of Rules might be laid down about publick and private,

private, great and small, seldom or frequent Offences. In one Word, a Reprover must be like the Thresher, that the Prophet describes, *Isa.* xxviii. 27, 28.

4. WE must reprove compassionately, with the deepest Sense of our own Failings, and so with the greater Pity to their Infirmities, *Gal.* vi. 1. *Bernard* said of himself, "That he never saw another Man sin, but he was distrustful and jealous of his own Heart:" This would take off a great deal of that Rigor and Roughness that renders a Reproof so unpleasing, and so unprofitable; for a Christian Tenderness and Compassion in the Reprover, is the best Way to work Sense and Passion in the Sinner.

THIS is the Way to mollify Mens Hearts; whereas by an austere rigid Reproof, instead of rendering thy Brother GOD's Friend, thou dost but render thyself his Enemy.

5. WE must reprove charitably, and with the greatest Love to Mens Persons, even when we shew the greatest Zeal against their Sins; for it is one Thing to be angry with the Sins, and another with his Person; therefore we should consult our Brother's Credit and Person, while we stab his Sin; and not in healing a Wound in his Conscience and Conversation, leave a Scar of Reproach upon his Person, and a Brand of Shame and Ignominy upon his Name: that were to do the Work of an Enemy under the Vizard of a Friend.

6. WE must reprove meekly, not in Rage, and Passion, and Bitterness, but in Meekness and Sweetness of Spirit; this Rule the Apostle gives, *2 Tim.* ii. 25.

Tho' there may be some Warmth in a Reproof, yet it must not be too hot. Take soft Words and hard Arguments to convince Gainsayers; and gentle Reproofs, and solid Reasons to reduce Offenders.

7. We must reprove Scripturally: That is, as near as we can to reprove our Brethren in Scripture-Text, and Scripture-Language, that so it may not seem to be we that speak, so much as the Spirit of our Father that speaks in us; and this is to reprove with Authority, *Tit. ii. 15.* What greater Authority and Majesty wherewith to awaken the Conscience of a Sinner, than the Word of God, by which he should be ruled, and by which he must certainly be judged?

End of the Thirty-sixth VOLUME.

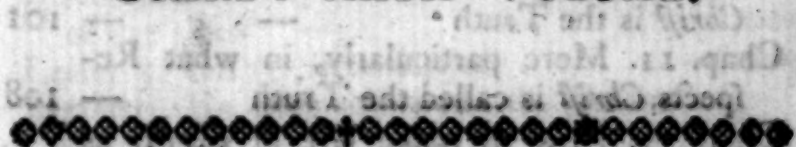




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THIRTY-SIXTH VOLUME.



EXTRACTS from the WORKS of the Rev.
Mr. JOHN BROWN.

CHRIST the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

JOHN xiv. 6.

JESUS saith unto them, *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: No Man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*

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How must we reprove, that we may not
partake of other Mens Sins?

I TIM. v. 22.

*Neither be Partaker of other Mens Sins, keep
thyself pure*

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